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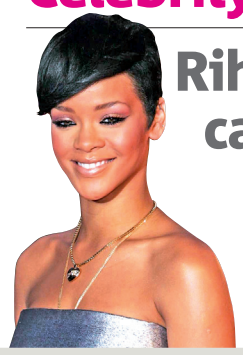
Celebrity Buzz



Rihanna cancels tour stop

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Vancouver Games

Countdown to 2010

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Valentine's Day

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• Coming up this week
Thursday — Recipes for a cosy night in, romantic wine selections and a selection of the worst love songs. Weekend edition — Alan Cross reveals why some love songs can misrepresent your true intentions.

MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mayor David Miller listens to City Hall staff talk about the budget. Residential property taxes will rise by four per cent in 2009 — an increase of $89 on a home assessed at $387,000, according to the budget unveiled yesterday. Under the $8.7-billion budget proposal, the total take from property taxes will rise by 2.5 per cent. Miller said the increase amounts to 25 cents per day.

Recession budget

Toronto Mayor David Miller unveiled a budget yesterday that will hike homeowner taxes by four per cent. But the impact of hidden increases more than doubles the pain, say opposition councillors.

"We believe the tax increase is 10 per cent, and that's what we should be talking about," Coun. Denzil Minnan-Wong told reporters. "Those are the fees and charges we've been seeing charged to the taxpayers and families across the city."

The budget doesn't acknowledge the rise in water bills and the new vehicle registration and garbage collection fees, he said.

The city's $8.7-billion operating budget — up $500 million from a year ago — was unveiled by Miller and budget chief Shelley Carroll. It offers only modest increases to some programs, but promises there won't be any major service cuts.

On an average home assessed at $387,000, the hike translates into an $89 increase in the tax bill — which the mayor says works out to about a quarter per day.

Pressures caused by the recession — including higher welfare rates and lower revenues from a tumbling housing market — mean this year's budget is focused on maintaining the status quo.

The budget doesn't offer any relief to residents who may have suddenly lost a job. But low-income seniors and disabled residents whose income falls below a certain threshold may qualify for a cancellation or deferral of the property tax hike.

"We're asking people who are in a different position, who are employed, to pay around 25 cents a day to make sure that we freeze TTC fares, that we build a great city, and that we help the most vulnerable," Miller told reporters yesterday.

The budget will be considered in the coming weeks, with time set aside for public input, and a final vote by city council March 31 and April 1.

While residents are facing a four per cent property tax hike, businesses will only pay one-third of that because of a policy of easing commercial property tax rates.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Budget highlights

- Making the streets to homes program permanent
- Adding 35 new or enhanced programs for at-risk groups including seniors, youth and women in priority neighbourhoods
- Opening the city's new 3-1-1, 24-hour customer service contact centre
- Reducing wait times for EMS paramedics by adding nursing shifts in hospital emergency rooms
- Maintaining snow clearing and removal service
- Increasing the hours at Toronto public libraries under the self-service project
- Increasing the number of recreation programs at various community centres
- Opening 70 kilometres of additional bike lanes
- Increasing the city's tree canopy through increased plantings and maintenance
- Opening new and upgraded parks and playgrounds

TTC wins big with subsidy

WINDFALL Transit is being touted as a winner in this year's city budget, with $91 million extra being added to the TTC's operating subsidy.

Riders shouldn't expect that to buy the kind of dramatic service improvements that were rolled out last year, but there will be some modest increases in service quality and quantity, said TTC chair Adam Giambrone.

The TTC has an operating budget of about $1.3 billion. The city is approving a 2009 subsidy of about $394 million to cover costs not covered through the fare box.

But a boost to increase bus frequencies to 20 minutes from 30 won't take place until at least November and will probably wait longer, he said.

The money, the drivers and even the buses — thanks to problems with the new hybrids — needed to boost frequency just won't be there for most of the year.

There will, however, be more subway service in the hours shouldering the morning and afternoon rush, and the system should look better kept with the addition of more cleaners, bricklayers and carpenters.

Despite the troubled economy, ridership growth of about three per cent is expected to continue this year, largely because of the service improvements launched in 2008.

In the downturn of the 1990s, service was slashed and the TTC laid off 1,600 people. "That's not happening" this time, Giambrone said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Free Daily News Group Inc., operating as Metro Toronto 1 Concorde Gate, Suite 703, Toronto, Ontario M3C 3N6. Publisher: Bill McDonald

CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

The Government of Canada's proposed Economic Action Plan contains new measures that may benefit you.

To help Canadian workers, the Action Plan provides more support for Employment Insurance (EI) programs and more investment in training programs so that Canadians can get the in-demand skills and expertise they need for the jobs of today and the future.

Strengthening benefits for Canadian workers

- ✓ Increasing EI regular benefit entitlements across the country by five additional weeks and raising the maximum entitlement from 45 to 50 weeks
- ✓ Extending EI benefits for unemployed workers who have been in one industry for many years and now need long-term training
- ✓ Extending work-sharing agreements by 14 weeks to a maximum of 52 weeks to help employers and workers avert temporary layoffs
- ✓ Increasing funding to provinces and territories to help them provide training programs for more Canadians
- ✓ Helping new Canadians with foreign professional credentials to find jobs in their fields

Canada's Economic Action Plan

www.actionplan.gc.ca

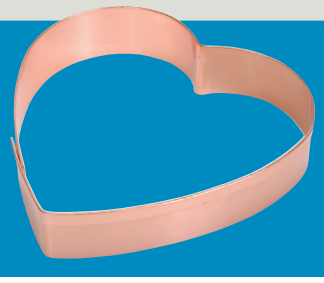
1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)
TTY: 1-800-926-9105

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Police looking for teens in robbery
Police are looking for two teenagers after an 88-year-old woman's purse was stolen in Bowmanville. The woman was waiting for a bus at King Street East and Simpson Avenue on Monday when two males grabbed her purse and ran off. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Local



T.O. schools give with their hearts

They gave some dough, got some dough and by the end of it had raised about $4,000 for their fellow Scarborough students. In a unique Valentine's fundraiser, children at nine elementary schools paid $1 to decorate a heart cookie with all proceeds going to snack and breakfast programs in needy schools in their Scarborough southwest ward. Among the schools taking part were Blantyre, J.G. Workman, Mason Road, Courcelette, Birch Cliff Heights and Danforth Gardens. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Food
Metro brings you a blueprint for romantic dinners, the best wines and the worst love songs.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Blogs Hollywood Rants against the pointlessness of movie ratings
Blogs The Blog Street Bullies take a swipe at dismal Blue Jays free-agent signings in the off-season
Video Canada's Olympic athletes face high expectations in Vancouver at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 5 0 6; **Ontario Pick 4:** 0 2 2 9
Encore: 8647468
Daily Keno: 3, 4, 6, 11, 15, 18, 21, 22, 27, 29, 30, 35, 37, 41, 44, 55, 59, 61, 62 and 69
These results are not official.

JVS job fair swamped

Nexicore recruiter Dena Marcos sat at an empty desk with only six interviews booked for a handful of specialized high-tech positions.

Across the room, a long line of anxious job hunters snaked away from Joan James' booth where about 40 jobs were up for grabs.

Those were the extremes of yesterday's JVS job fair, where more than 600 people came looking for work.

"We do recruiting for a lot of clients," James said of the dozens of positions she was looking to fill. "They (employers) are looking for people to work in different positions."

Both recruiters were among the nine employers, including the Toronto Fire Service, that participated in the JVS Toronto Employment and Resource Centre job fair at Victoria Park and Sheppard avenues yesterday. Jo-Anne Cameron, a manager at JVS, said the number of job seekers more than doubled since the last fair in November because of the current hard times. She said JVS had to do a lot of groundwork to convince employers to attend because so few are hiring. But the number of job seekers is surging.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

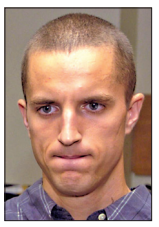
Capt. Adina Kaufman, from the Toronto Fire Service recruitment and community outreach section, talks with Jeff Roque of Toronto yesterday during a job fair put on by JVS Toronto.

Long lines at fair

- There was barely any space to move around inside the crowded building and the queue outside grew longer as the day progressed.
- The JVS fair said it has noticed an increase in the number of returning clients who had found work and then were laid off again.

Court hears war resister's case again

AMERICAN A Canadian immigration official failed to consider the hardships a high-profile American deserter and his family would face if forced to return to the United States, a Federal Court judge heard yesterday.



Jeremy Hinzman

In arguing Jeremy Hinzman's case, lawyer Alyssa Manning told the court that deserters who have spoken out against the U.S. invasion of Iraq have been singled out for prosecution while others have been allowed to quietly leave the military.

As a result, she told Judge James Russell, Hinzman would likely be the victim of "differential treatment" if returned to the States, something the immigration officer did not consider properly.

Hinzman, 30, who staved off deportation in September after his refugee claim was turned down, is hoping the court will order Ottawa to take another look at his application to be allowed to remain in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Driver charged in 2008 QEW death

TRACTOR-TRAILER The driver of a tractor-trailer that fell from Highway 427 onto the Queen Elizabeth Way highway in November, killing one person, has now been charged.

Jeremy Liedtke of London, Ont., is charged with dangerous driving causing death and two counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm. His vehicle hit the guardrail, and the truck's trailer fell onto the other highway below.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Not in my backyard' not welcome

POLITICS The "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) syndrome that has created roadblocks for new energy projects will no longer be tolerated by the Ontario government, Premier Dalton McGuinty warned yesterday as he pitched his proposed Green Energy Act.

McGuinty told the London Chamber of Commerce the legislation will include provisions to stop special interest groups or municipal governments from trying to block green energy projects for anything other than safety or environmental concerns.

"We need those jobs. We need clean electricity."
Dalton McGuinty

"We're going to find a way through this new legislation to make it perfectly clear that NIMBYism will no longer prevail when it comes to putting up wind turbines, solar panels and bio-fuel plants," he told the business audience.

"We need those jobs. We need clean electricity, and we need to assume our full responsibility in the face of climate change."

McGuinty said they are hoping to create 50,000 new jobs from green energy projects, adding residents want those jobs in their community,

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

DEATH A concert in memory of Tyler McGill — stabbed in July 2007 — will start at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 15, at Cactus Pete's on Birchmount Road in Scarborough and will include door prizes and a silent auction. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pride seeking submissions

Pride Toronto is seeking submissions from artists of all disciplines to perform at its 2009 festival, scheduled from June 19-28. Deadline is Feb. 27. For more details, see www.pridetoronto.com. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Province to unveil new hospital plan

GTA The province is unveiling sweeping initiatives to tackle the problems of long stays in emergency departments and a lack of access to family health care. A multi-pronged approach, expected to be announced this week and next, will include: Non-urgent patients diverted from crowded ERs and elderly patients discharged faster into community care. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Police show video of '06 stabbing

CRIME The video opens with a close-up of Reon Paul's body, his shirt lifted above his waist, legs unnaturally straightened and blood on the ground.

The video, released yesterday by police, is not the typical surveillance footage of criminals caught in the act. It is a graphic snapshot of the chaos that erupted in a North York parking lot just seconds after the 22-year-old George Brown College culinary student was stabbed in the chest during a 2006 World Cup of Soccer party to celebrate Ghana's win over the United States. Raw footage, such as this, has become a powerful tool in criminal investigations and one that has changed the way detectives approach their work. Homicide investigators are hoping this short video will jog memories and reignite interest in the unsolved case.

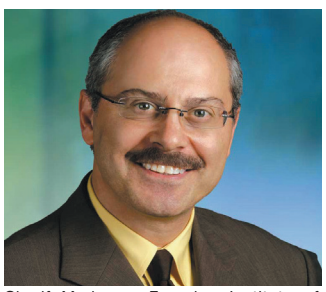
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Arrests

- Reon Paul, a Guyana native who was known to police, was pronounced dead that same day in hospital and three people were taken into custody for questioning but released.

Today's economy has turned commercial real estate into a pipeline of profits

"My free workshop reveals how a tough economy is helping investors generate massive wealth in the commercial real estate market."



Cherif Medawar, Founder, Institute of Commercial Real Estate. Self-made millionaire and real estate magnate, he has purchased commercial real estate all over the world. Learn his strategies at a free workshop in your area.

Turbulent times stir up tremendous profits. And that's never been more apparent than in today's commercial real estate market. Today's rock-bottom prices means it's easier and cheaper NOW to own quality Canadian commercial real estate than ever.

The floodgates are open for individual investors looking for the same reliable pipeline of extra income that the mega-wealthy have counted on for decades.

QUALITY COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE IS ACTUALLY BEING FUELED BY THE ECONOMY

Unlike the turmoil and volatility in the residential housing and stock markets, the commercial real estate market's fundamentals are strong.

Some experts agree we'll see a slowdown in new construction well into 2009. High demand equals higher rent and more guaranteed monthly income streams.

YOU CAN MAKE FULL-TIME INCOME WITH PART-TIME EFFORT

A home's value is based on comparable sales. But commercial values are based on net operating income. That means a modest $500 monthly rent increase can add $100,000 to a property's value.

At my free workshop, you'll find out how this phenomenal math works to your advantage.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE IS A RELIABLE PATH TO FINANCIAL SECURITY IN TOUGH TIMES

At my free workshop, you'll discover how to start investing in commercial real estate right away… even if you have no experience.

No matter what your goal… a secure retirement, a better life for your family, the chance to be your own boss, a steady income stream… commercial real estate ownership can make it happen.

You'll Discover

- 5 no money down strategies that work in today's economy
- How to convert your residential losers into commercial winners
- How to find the best most reliable tenants in the country

You Must Attend If

- You want to break into real estate investing at the most profitable end
- You are a real estate or mortgage professional
- You want a safe way to recoup retirement losses in your RRSPs

Don't Let These 3 Myths Stop You From Owning Commercial Real Estate

Myth: Quality commercial properties are difficult to find.
Reality: It's actually never been easier since they are now selling at a far greater value due to higher net operating incomes.

Myth: Quality tenants are difficult to find.
Reality: When you're plugged in to the Institute of Commercial Real Estate's Rolodex of tenants it's easier than ever to locate quality renters with specs.

Myth: Finding financing is tough in today's economy.
Reality: Quality commercial properties are being financed every day. At the workshop discover how we'll set you up with preferred lenders offering some of the lowest interest rates in years.

Commercial Real Estate Is Today's Safe Haven for Investors

✓ In today s tough economy investors are looking for reliable cash flow. With the near collapse of the residential real estate market and stock market volatility — there is one safe haven for today s investors… commercial real estate.

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✓ At the free workshop, you'll discover how you can begin making back your stock market losses, building up your RRSPs, and creating a secure retirement.

This powerful workshop is for four days only and it's FREE

100% Canadian Real Estate Strategies

The Institute of COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 15, 2009	FEBRUARY 16, 2009	FEBRUARY 17, 2009	FEBRUARY 18, 2009
3 p.m.	1 p.m. or 7 p.m.	1 p.m. or 7 p.m.	9 a.m. or 1 p.m.
Toronto East Delta	Toronto Airport Westin Bristol Place	Toronto Airport Westin Bristol Place	Brampton Courtyard by Marriott
2035 Kennedy Road	950 Dixon Road	950 Dixon Road	90 Biscayne Crescent
Scarborough	Toronto	Toronto	Brampton

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KEVIN FRAYER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jim Brickman, president of Brick Brewing, samples a bottle of Red Cap ale in a stubby bottle at the legendary Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto, April 11, 2002. Brick has ended its revival of the old-time stubby beer bottle, announcing that its Red Cap ale will now be sold in industry standard bottles.

Brick kills off stubby revival

Brick Brewing Co. Ltd. has cancelled its revival of the old-time stubby beer bottle, announcing that its Red Cap ale will now be sold in industry standard bottles at a lower price.

The heritage brew — described as Canada's most popular beer in the 1950s when it was made by the former Carling Brewing Co. — will be sold at Ontario's lowest legal price of $28 for a case of 24: $25.60 plus deposit, Brick said yesterday.

That's down from $16.95 for 12 and $29.95 for two packs of 12 stubbies.

"Over seven years have passed since Red Cap was re-introduced into the Ontario market in the stubby bottle," Brick CEO George Croft said in a statement.

Brick's use of the stubby — which from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s had been the Canadian industry standard — provoked a long dispute with The Beer Store, the Ontario retail operation owned by the big beer makers, which objected to having to sort the unique bottle. Litigation over the matter was settled last September. The terms of that settlement were not made public, but Sean Dennis, the regional brewery's director of marketing, said the issue did not motivate Brick's decision to scrap the stubby.

28 The cost in dollars for a 24 case of the new Red Cap Ale bottles. $28 is the lowest legal price Ontario allows beer providers to sell their product at.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

DRUGS Investigators stumbled upon a hashish drug lab in Scarborough yesterday after police received an "unknown trouble" call in connection to a domestic assault. Once inside, investigators discovered what looked like a meat grinder, a machine used in the production of hash and a "fair quantity" of the drug. Two people were arrested from a house just south of Steeles Avenue and McCowan Road.

SPEEDING It appears no one is exempt from Ontario's street racing law — including the police. A provincial police officer in an unmarked vehicle was stopped on Highway 403 on Jan. 31 for driving 65 km/h over the limit. Det.-Const. Heidi Fischer was charged after an investigation determined she was "not within the lawful execution of her duties." She will appear in a Brantford court on March 24. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Celebrating black history in schools
The contributions of Africans in Canada and worldwide will be showcased through the International African Inventors Museum as it travels from school to school. Students will learn about famous people of African heritage who were inventors, scientists and valuable contributors to society. Visit www.tdsb.on.ca/modelschools. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Flower market bloomin'

Everything's comin' up roses! And tulips and gardenias and chrysanthemums, too.

That's how it is most days at the Ontario Flower Growers auction in Mississauga, where buyers put their mettle to the petal to scoop the best blooms.

With Valentine's Day around the corner, things are heating up in the refrigerated warehouse, where more than one-million flowers cool their heels until it's their turn to join the parade under The Clocks.

It's on the two huge clocks in the tiered auction room where, five days a week, flower prices are set in what's called a Dutch auction, modelled after those in Europe.

Unlike a typical auction, where a quick-tongued auctioneer drives up the price to the shouts of eager bidders, the flower auction operates on the clock, with prices dropping as buyers let their fingers fly over computerized keypads at their seats.

If you wait long enough, you get a great price. If you wait too long, you miss out.

This week's auctions have been overwhelmed with tulips and, to a lesser extent, roses and they fly out the door on their way to flower shops across Greater Toronto and Ontario.

On Monday, more than 250 buyers started arriving in the dark shortly after 5 a.m. to scout out stock ready to go on the block in the two-storey auction house, opened in 1972 just west of Pearson International Airport.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

JIM WILKES/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Anne Cao of College Park Flowers in Courtice drags carts of flowers she purchased through a storage area.

Teachers offered new deal to avert job action

Education Minister Kathleen Wynne is putting a new offer on the table in a last-ditch effort to avert job action by elementary public school teachers.

Wynne met with union and school board officials today to present the revised offer as the clock counts down to a crucial deadline.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario has threatened to hold a strike vote if "significant progress" isn't made in contract talks with school boards by Friday.

The union had failed to reach a deal with the province despite 11th-hour talks that broke off in December.

The province had offered an $800-million deal that would have given teachers a 12 per cent pay raise over four years.

But that was trimmed to four per cent over two years — about $268 million — when no agreement was reached despite having extended the deadline to Dec. 5.

Wynne insisted for weeks the money behind the sweetened deal was gone because the province's troubled economy was worsening.

The union maintains the main issue for teachers is not salaries, but a $711-per-student funding gap between elementary and high schools in Ontario.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Teacher strike

- If progress is not made by the end of this week, more than 73,000 teachers and education workers could be in a strike position by the end of March.

McGuinty won't speed up uploading programs to cities

LEGISLATURE Premier Dalton McGuinty is dismissing calls to speed up the uploading of social assistance programs to cities despite warnings about the impact of rising welfare costs.

McGuinty says the province is already taking on 80 per cent of those costs, so its burden would be greater than that of cities when it comes to any increase.

He says all levels of government are struggling with the economic downturn, and everyone will have to find a way to manage.

Ontario promised in October to take back some of the costs downloaded onto municipalities, but the plan is being phased in over the next decade.

A recent TD Economics report warned homeowners in struggling Ontario communities may be hit with a big property-tax hike as more people turn to welfare during the recession.

The report specifically singled out Toronto, but said other municipalities will also face problems as the economy sours.

Ontario currently funds 80 per cent of welfare costs while municipalities pay 20 per cent. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

CREDIT The province has given auto insurers 60 days to eliminate any practices that exclude motorists with poor credit scores or a low income from obtaining the best-available prices for coverage. The province already has regulations in place to prevent the practice. Now regulators are clamping down on any abuse.

AUTO Industry Minister Tony Clement says Feb. 20 is D-day for Canada's auto industry when Chrysler and GM will present recovery plans to Ottawa that will determine the level of federal-provincial bailout funding. The move will come three days after they make a similar pitch to the U.S. Congress.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

An important change in how organ and tissue donation decisions are registered in Ontario.

Have you registered a decision of "No" or "Undecided" regarding organ and tissue donation?

Then, you should know that, Ontario has changed the way donation decisions are recorded. Now, only a "Yes" to organ and tissue donation will be collected and stored in the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) database. At the appropriate time, this information will be accessed by the Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN), Ontario's provincial organ donation agency.

If you have previously registered "NO" or "UNDECIDED", this decision will no longer be used or disclosed to TGLN, as of July 1, 2009.

Therefore, it is important that you tell your family or loved ones of your decision, to ensure that your wishes are properly conveyed to your health care team at the relevant time.

Make your donation decision known to your family.

To find out more, visit www.ontario.ca/organdonation or call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161.

Paid for by the Government of Ontario.

Ontario

No jail for man who stabbed neighbour's dog

A man in Kamloops, B.C., who stabbed his neighbour's dog to death after it barked for three hours straight, has escaped a jail sentence. Russell Folk has been handed a six-month conditional sentence, half of which must be served under house arrest. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

MP wants to help airline passengers

A New Democrat MP is going to bat for air travellers by introducing a private member's bill he's calling a passengers' bill of rights. The proposed legislation from Manitoba MP Jim Maloway would require airlines to post the all-inclusive price of airfares in their advertising. Those prices, which encompass all relevant taxes and surcharges, can sometimes double the figures airlines currently publicize. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Immigration could slow

Rising unemployment could force the federal government to nudge shut the door on thousands of foreigners looking to make Canada their new home, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says.

TOM HANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

CAW head Ken Lewenza, left, looks on as United Steelworkers chief Ken Neumann addresses the media in Ottawa yesterday.

While Ottawa is sticking by its pledge to accept 240,000 to 265,000 permanent residents this year, the worsening economic outlook may prompt the government to rethink that target in the coming months, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said yesterday.

"We don't want people coming to Canada and facing unemployment. We need to be sensitive to the changing labour market, and if we need to make modifications, we will," he said.

Kenney said Canada, which accepted 247,000 permanent residents last year, so far "stands alone" among other nations by maintaining its levels for permanent residents. However, he conceded that may change, given economic conditions.

The target of up to 265,000 permanent residents includes up to 156,600 immigrants in the economic category, 71,000 in the family category and 37,400 in the humanitarian category.

Meanwhile, the heads of two labour unions whose workers have been hard hit by the downturn in manufacturing complained that restrictive employment insurance (EI) rules are punishing the tens of thousands of Canadians who are losing their jobs.

"The government has basically failed us miserably," said Ken Neumann, national director of the United Steelworkers union, who was joined by Canadian Auto Workers union president Ken Lewenza.

Neumann said about 40 per cent of the unemployed workers in Canada don't qualify for EI, for one reason or another.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

U.S. top military boss backs Afghan surge

TROOPS The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff says there's no winning the ground war in Afghanistan without dramatically improving the country's civilian governance.

Admiral Mike Mullen says Canadians and Americans are "living in very dangerous times" and that's why the relationship between the two countries is more important than ever.

While the United States is contemplating a large increase in troops in Afghanistan, Mullen says NATO really needs to "surge civilian capability" in the country.

Canadian troops have been fighting alongside Americans in Afghanistan for seven years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

COURT A Liberal MP says Saudi Arabia's supreme court has ordered a review of a death sentence imposed on a Canadian man. Dan McTeague, has been lobbying on behalf of Mohamed Kohail.

POLL The Tories' federal leadership advantage has evaporated since Michael Ignatieff took over the Liberal helm, a new poll suggests. The Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey indicates the newly minted Liberal leader is viewed more favourably than either Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper or NDP Leader Jack Layton. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Man dead after being shot by RCMP
A man was shot dead yesterday by RCMP during a domestic dispute in the B.C. Interior town of 100 Mile House. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Help detainees: Group

The Canadian Council for Refugees is demanding Ottawa "resettle without delay" five Guantanamo Bay detainees who fear persecution if returned to their homelands.

Willing sponsors have been found to look after the financial and emotional needs of the men for the first year of their life in Canada, said Janet Dench, executive director of the refugee council.

The latest addition to this group — which includes an Algerian who once spent five years living in Montreal and three Uighurs from China — is a 37-year-old Kurd from Syria who had been living in Kabul at the time of his arrest.

Maassoum Abdah Mouhammad, nicknamed "Bilal," had been there for a year working and searching for a wife when the United States invaded Afghanistan after the 9/11 terror attacks. He was arrested along the Pakistan border while trying to flee.

"I certainly hope that Bilal will be awarded asylum in Canada," his U.S. lawyer, Matt O'Hara, said in a telephone interview yesterday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Khadr trial

- Guantanamo Bay detainee Omar Khadr would be willing to face prosecution in Canada and undergo a period of transition away from his family under the guidance of an expert team if the United States sent him home, The Canadian Press has learned.

News in brief

ASSAULTS Montreal police say two men have been arrested and will be arraigned later today after two taxi drivers were brazenly attacked. The accused, who are 21 and 27, face a number of charges including attempted murder.

THREATS The chief organizer of this summer's re-enactment of the 1759 battle on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City says the event will go ahead despite strong opposition from sovereigntists.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brazeau told PM about trouble

CONTROVERSY Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau says he alerted the prime minister at the first sign of trouble.

Brazeau

The 34-year-old was the national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at the time, and he had just learned that a former employee had filed a sexual harassment complaint against him.

This was last March 25 — nine months before Prime Minister Stephen Harper named him one of 18 senators. Brazeau said he was concerned enough to let Harper's office know.

"I immediately notified the Prime Minister's Office that there was an allegation," Brazeau said.

He said he called again to let officials know an independent third-party investigation had cleared him of any wrongdoing.

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Russian investigators blame pilot error for plane crash

Russian officials say alcohol and pilot confusion over the instrument panel on a Boeing 737-500 jet operated by an Aeroflot subsidiary were responsible for a crash that killed 88 people Sept. 14 last year in the city of Perm. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Barbie's dream job: Chancellor

Barbie can add another dream job to her list — Germany's first female head-of-government. Toy company Mattel Inc. debuted the Chancellor Angela Merkel Barbie doll, left, at an international toy fair in Nuremberg. Merkel attended the fair's opening and said she approved of her miniature doppelganger — even though Barbie's familiar face and figure do not exactly replicate her real-life appearance. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Senate passes stimulus bill

VICTORY The U.S. Senate has approved President Barack Obama's giant economic stimulus measure.

The 61-37 vote by the Senate was a key victory for the president but sets up difficult negotiations with the House of Representatives, which passed a slightly different version than the $838 billion US bill approved yesterday. Just three Republicans voted with 56 Democrats and two independents.

In the House, the legislation didn't get a single Republican vote.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, meanwhile, outlined few details of how they would spend the remaining $350 billion of the $700 billion bank bailout program started last fall. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vote too close to call

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and hardline rival Benjamin Netanyahu both claimed victory in Israel's parliamentary election yesterday, which early returns suggested was too close to call.

With 67 per cent of the votes counted, Livni's centrist Kadima party had 29 seats in the 120-seat parliament while Netanyahu's hawkish Likud party was right behind with 28, Israeli television said.

However, soldiers' votes on bases across the country weren't being tallied until tomorrow evening, which could shift the results by a seat or two.

Regardless of who gets the most votes, Netanyahu's Likud party appeared to have the upper hand in forming a governing coalition thanks to a strong showing by other right-wing parties. Exit polls earlier showed Livni with a slight lead, but strong gains by right-wing parties overall would make it difficult, and perhaps impossible, for her to form a government.

Even if Livni could overcome the formidable obstacles and become Israel's second female prime minister after Golda Meir, the early results suggested she would have to rely on the participation of right-wing parties opposed to her vision of giving up land in exchange for a peace deal with the Palestinians.

Israeli exit polls have not always been reliable, but the projections showed hardline parties winning 66 seats, with liberal parties capturing just 54 seats. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERNAT ARMANGUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PETER DEJONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and Israel's Foreign Minister and Kadima Party leader Tzipi Livni, right, react during election night rallies in Tel Aviv, Israel.

News in brief

AUSTRALIA FIRES The high death toll from wildfires across southeastern Australia has forced authorities to re-examine an accepted survival strategy: Get out early or hunker down and fight. Many people waited too long. Recovery teams found charred bodies on roadsides and in wrecked cars

KARZAI President Hamid Karzai's star is waning in Washington, with U.S. President Barack Obama saying Afghanistan's government is detached from the communities it is supposed to serve. The critical comments signal an end to the era of special relationship that Karzai enjoyed with former U.S. president George W. Bush.

SRI LANKA At least 16 patients being treated at a makeshift hospital in the Sri Lankan war zone were killed by shelling, the Red Cross said, as the military accused rebel fighters of killing 19 other civilians fleeing the area. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Men: Give gifts a little thought

ModernLife

Georgie Binks
georgiebinks@rogers.com

What is it with men and gifts? How can a man who has written poetry for his lover, feted her with engraved trinkets suddenly show up with kitchen gadgets?

A blip on the radar, but mention this to other women and immediately the taps start flowing.

"At least you got something," moans one. "My last birthday my husband gave me nothing. Nothing."

Another woman's husband arrived home from work one birthday and announced, "Your present's in the trunk if you want to go out and get it."

Not all stories are bad. One friend's husband gave her a lamp crafted from a piece of driftwood he had found on a beach they had visited. A little weird, but thoughtful.

Valentine'sDay

Another male friend tells me his wife wanted to learn saxophone, so he bought her one. The next year she received sheet music to go with it. "The key," he says, "is listening. Sometimes I store it in my memory, other times my BlackBerry."

Ah yes — listening — an excellent way to figure out your gal. Alana Gun, who runs a gift basket franchise in Winnipeg, says, "Men have no ideas. If they do, it's to put flowers in a gift basket. You cannot cover flowers in cello wrap." (Speaking of flowers, what is it with men and carnations?)

What also is it that makes a dude think he can use the Hallmark conspiracy theory to calm a disappointed woman. (I should be able to give you something any day I want). When I was married, I simply told my husband where to pick up my gift — behind the counter of the store where it was being saved. Kind of took the surprise out of it, but that wasn't a bad thing.

Good gifts may not necessarily mean a great guy, but bad or no gifts start to grate on a woman. It signifies he doesn't care enough to listen.

Some guys just have it. When my son was six, he took my pink Post-it notes, drew an arrow on each one, placing them all the way up the stairs and into my room. On my pillow was a note reading, "I love you."

Guys, I can't tell you what to give because every woman is different. Try to remember past conversations for clues, even a word. Stressed = spa; sexy = lingerie; very stressed out = trip. (By the way, sex is not a present for women, only for men.)

For most women, it's not the thought that counts, but that there's been any thought at all that really matters.

Georgie Binks is a Toronto freelance writer who has written about gender and relationships for CBC.ca, Elle, Chatelaine and Homemakers.

Word on the street: Should Vancouver scale down its Winter Olympics plans for 2010 in light of the current economic conditions?

Kristin Teasell
age 21, Toronto

A: I think that it's kind of like an investment. It's tough to weigh, but in the long run, I think it will bring a lot of money into Canada.

Yusuf Gad
age 32, Toronto

A: Yes. ... The people of Vancouver shouldn't get stuck with the bill knowing full well that the corporations are going to make money on it.

Mikaela Lefaive
age 24, Toronto

A: I think the Olympics are an exception and an opportunity to show what's great about Canada. So, in this case, maybe not.

Mark Weir
age 28, Ottawa

A: I think it should be somewhat scaled down. ... If everyone has to cut back, I think the Olympics can maybe do without so many fireworks and things like that.

Aly Jetha
age 39, Vancouver

A: Absolutely not. The larger the Olympics, the better it is for the economy because more money will come into the economy.

Laura Steffen
age 26, Vancouver

A: Yes, because I believe that Vancouver is going to end up as broke as other cities have when they've had the Olympics.

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Glitch hits power generator's bottom line

Alberta-based power producer TransAlta Corp. says its first-quarter profits could be slashed by as much as $19 million because of a glitch at one of its Alberta generating plants, which is operating at about half its capacity. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

HarperCollins closes division

BOOKS HarperCollins, the publisher of such authors as Nobel laureate Doris Lessing, has closed and dispersed the Collins division and laid off some employees. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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In brief

PAUL SAKUMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cash-strapped consumers kept buying McDonald's burgers and breakfast items last month, helping the chain post a 7.1 per cent worldwide increase in sales for the month.

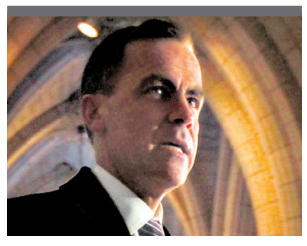
JOBS Wal-Mart Stores Inc. says it is cutting 700 to 800 jobs at its Arkansas headquarters but would be adding thousands of jobs at its stores this year. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Top banker defends his growth outlook

The Canadian and United States stimulus packages to kickstart the battered North American economy won't be fully felt until 2010, says Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney.

The central banker told a House of Commons committee yesterday that low interest rates, exceptional cash injections into the financial system and multi-billion-dollar stimulus spending will eventually rescue the economy, but that it will take time.

His forecast suggests the Canadian economy will continue to shed jobs for the next year or so and unemployment could rise to more than nine per cent.



"We don't do optimism; we don't do pessimism; we do realism."
Mark Carney, Bank of Canada governor

Economists expect the Canadian economy to shrink by more than one per cent this year as the manufacturing sector continues to shed employment and resources industries cut jobs to cope with lower prices for oil, grain, metals and minerals.

Carney was under pressure from MPs to defend his forecast from January that sees the economy rebounding to 3.8 per cent in 2010, a projection seen as rosy by many economists.

"We don't do optimism; we don't do pessimism; we do realism at the Bank of Canada," he said. "We don't do spin."

But Carney admitted that there is wide disagreement among economists about how deep the recession will be and how long it will last. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

RIM wins takeover bid for Certicom?

TAKEOVER Research In Motion appears to have prevailed in its pursuit of Mississauga-based Certicom Corp., with RIM's only declared rival stepping away from a bidding war for the data encryption specialist.

California-based VeriSign Inc. said yesterday that it has decided not to match the $3-a-share cash offer from RIM, the Waterloo-based maker of BlackBerry smartphones.

The RIM offer topped a $2.10-per-share price previously agreed to between VeriSign and Certicom and RIM's own initial offer of $1.50, which Certicom rejected as inadequate.

VeriSign is entitled to a $4-million break fee. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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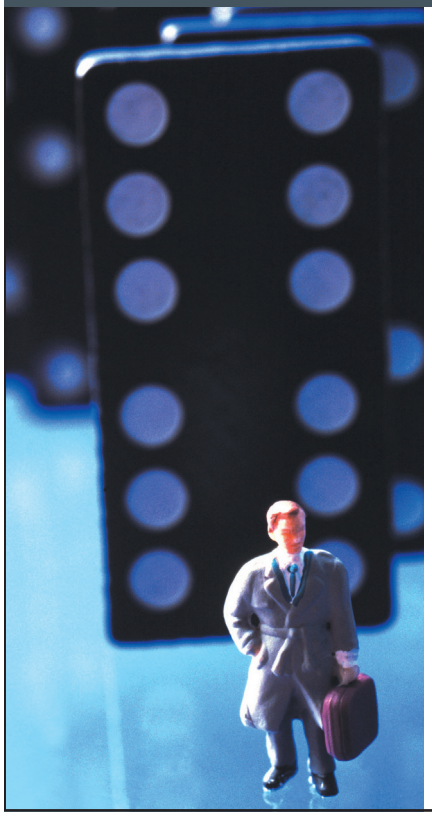

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Elevator music maker files for Chapter 11
Muzak Holdings, the maker of elevator music, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection from creditors yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In brief

JOBS General Motors Corp. is planning to slash another 10,000 salaried jobs by May, reducing its white-collar workers by 14 per cent to 63,000. The company has 2,000 white-collar employees in Canada, but the number of positions to be cut at the Canadian subsidiary wasn't immediately known.

BEER Molson Coors Brewing Company says reduced global sales of its beer and the impact of a stronger U.S. dollar reduced its fourth-quarter profit by 49 per cent from a year earlier. Canadian sales decreased 2.1 per cent to 1.8 million barrels. The brewer said it earned $90.7 million US in the fourth quarter, down from year-ago earnings of $176.2 million or 96 cents per share.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Ticketmaster's clout growing

Ticketmaster Entertainment and event promoter Live Nation confirmed yesterday that they plan to combine their acts in a so-called merger of equals.

The combination of North America's biggest ticket distributor and biggest venue operator would operate under the name Live Nation Entertainment.

The arrangement between the two Los Angeles-based companies is likely to face intense scrutiny from U.S. antitrust authorities — especially because Live Nation recently developed its own ticketing service working in competition against Ticketmaster.

Ticketmaster sells tickets on behalf of more than 80 per cent of the major arenas and stadiums in the United States. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Concerns

- Ticketmaster generates complaints over the extra charges it places on tickets and its reselling service for already purchased tickets through TicketsNow.com, says Mel Fruitman, vice-president of the Consumers' Association of Canada.

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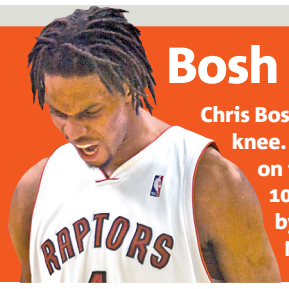
Avery assigned to Rangers' AHL team

Sean Avery is resuming his hockey career with the New York Rangers' AHL affiliate in Hartford. He practised with the team yesterday after being assigned by the Dallas Stars. Avery hasn't played since his NHL suspension in December for making a crude remark about other hockey players dating his former girlfriends. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Bosh out of all-star game

Chris Bosh will not play in Sunday's NBA all-star game due to a sprained right knee. Bosh missed last night's game at Minnesota, his third straight game on the sidelines. He suffered the injury in the fourth quarter of a 115-107 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers last Wednesday. He will be replaced by guard Mo Williams of the Cavaliers, who was chosen yesterday by NBA commissioner David Stern. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: JOHN CHICK, JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Cats burn Leafs again

NHL RESULT

Leafs 4 **Panthers** 5 (OT)

VS

For the second time in a week, the Maple Leafs coughed up a two-goal, third-period lead to the Panthers, losing 5-4 in overtime in south Florida last night.

Furthermore to synergy, Richard Zednik scored the winning goal for Florida at 1:02 of OT exactly one year after he suffered a severe neck injury in Buffalo.

Niklas Hagman scored twice for the Leafs.

JOHN CHICK/METRO NEWS SERVICES

Raptors Big win in Minny

JIM MONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joey Graham dunks against the Timberwolves last night. Graham had 24 points as the Raptors overcame a 13-point, second-half deficit to beat Minnesota 110-102. Jermaine O'Neal added 22 points with eight rebounds. The Raps are back home tonight to the Spurs (7 p.m., TSN2/FAN 590).

Sports in brief

MLB Houston Astros all-star shortstop Miguel Tejada has been charged with lying to U.S. Congress about steroids. He is scheduled to appear in court today where he is expected to plead guilty. The 2002 AL MVP faces as much as a year in jail if convicted on the misdemeanour charge of making misrepresentations. Under U.S. federal guidelines, he would probably receive a lighter sentence.

Tejada

MLB The Blue Jays acquired right-handed pitcher Matt Bush from the San Diego Padres yesterday for a player to be named later or cash considerations. Bush was chosen first overall in the 2004 draft as a shortstop, but converted to pitching during the 2007 season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Vitti a vital addition for Toronto FC

If you had told any Toronto FC fan last season that the club was going to have trouble keeping all its strikers happy in 2009, they would have laughed in your face — or dumped a beer on your head. Either would have been a proper reaction to such lunacy.

2008 was the year that Jeff Cunningham was run out of town, Danny Dichio (TFC's leading scorer) watched much of the season sidelined with a concussion and a stadium's hopes fell to the slender shoulders of 17-year-old Fuad (I'm no longer Abdus) Ibrahim.

Mercifully, Chad Barrett provided some much needed relief in the second half of the year — but strikers were a rare commodity running the plastic pitch at BMO in '08.

But, as they say, it's a whole new year. Toronto announced this week the acquisition of long sought after Argentine striker Pablo Vitti. The 23-year-old was impressing Toronto brass as far back as July in last year's friendly against Independiente — in which he scored the game's only goal.

JustSoccer

Ben Rycroft
ben.rycroft@metronews.ca

Vitti, fleet footed and possessing plenty of flair, has struggled to produce results the last few seasons, but is now Toronto's go-to striker.

Which begs the question — where does everyone else fit in?

Barrett's relative consistency last season, mixed with his mountain of potential, makes him the obvious choice to start alongside Vitti.

Dichio re-signed with the club in the off-season and took a pay cut to do it. As a guy towards the end of his career, and one of tremendous character, he will likely accept whatever role is asked of him, but if he's healthy and fit he will want to play.

Ibrahim, who at times last year showed that he could be a future force in the MLS (or abroad), still requires a fair amount of development to mould that promise into something tangible — hard to do if you're the third or fourth striker down the line.

And that still leaves recent draft picks O'Brian White and Kyle Hall — Canadians who, with the elimination of the MLS reserve division, will both be hard-pressed to find a proper role on the squad.

It's hardly the worst thing in the world to have too much of a good thing, but Toronto coach John Carver will find himself juggling lineups as much as he is juggling egos this year — and it's hard to say which will be the tougher job.

Watch Ben Rycroft on the It's Called Football show every Sunday at metronews.ca

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Metro Drive

Vue from a class

Student engineers from three Canadian universities have unveiled their projects in the EcoCAR competition at the Washington Auto Show, Canadian Driver reports. The three-year challenge requires students to fit alternative technologies to Saturn Vue vehicles. The participating universities are: University of Victoria, University of Ontario Institute of Technology and University of Waterloo. CANADIANDRIVER.COM

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

The new BMW Z4, left, and the Lincoln MKT, will make their Canadian debuts at the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto. The event kicks off this Friday at Rogers Centre and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

New age dawns in T.O.

The future's on hyperdrive at this year's Toronto auto show

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Despite a challenging economy and a reduced market outlook for 2009, the Canadian International Auto Show (CIAS) makes its return to Toronto Friday. And while the weather might be cold and gloomy, the show itself will feature some of the hottest new models and technology influencing the sector today.

Spread over the North and South buildings of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre along with virtually the entire Rogers Centre, the show features over 79,000 square metres of exhibitor space, and every major manufacturer that sells vehicles in Canada will be ably represented. About 400 workers have been preparing for two weeks, unloading 375 transport trucks worth of vehicles and displays and installing nearly 48,063 square metres of carpeting, all in anticipation of hosting the largest consumer show of any kind in Canada.

The event's theme for 2009 is "The New Era," a way to show the public that offerings are changing rapidly given the economic and environmental challenges facing the auto industry today. David McClean, CIAS director of marketing services, thinks the show is evolving with consumer tastes and demands.

"We used 'The Turning Point' in 2008, and it was clear the industry was evolving in a new direction, but there wasn't much in the way of tangible evidence yet. It was almost too early. This year, 'The New Era' reflects all of these global issues we're facing."

McClean is very enthusiastic about the new technology on display at this year's CIAS, including hybrids, diesels and electrics. "The public will get to see all the alternatives to the gasoline engine. And we have the new 'GTA in Motion — The Future is Electric' showcase, where they can see some first-generation electric vehicles on display."

Also, students from Humber College will participate in the show, and will "create and demonstrate electric mobility solutions that embrace the viability of the all-electric future."

Away from the 'green' theme, some of the desirable machinery introduced will focus on high-end Canadian debuts, including the new Audi S4 and V10-powered R8, the BMW Z4, Lincoln MKT, Cadillac SRX and Jaguar XFR, while others are aimed at a more entry-level market, like the attractive Kia Forte and Chevrolet Equinox. And while they debuted at the Montreal Auto Show in January, funky vehicles like the Kia Soul, Nissan Cube and Honda's new Insight hybrid will surely attract plenty of crowds.

For those who are more interested in the automotive lifestyle, CIAS also features its Red Zone which McClean called an ensemble of music, fashion and culture. Some old favourites continue, including the Sport Compact Revolution area where there are plenty of modified show and race vehicles, and a marketplace with 125 vendors selling everything from old vehicle brochures to new wheels and tires.

The new Jaguar XFR is set to wow gearheads at the Toronto auto show.

If you go

- **WHAT:** 2009 Canadian International Auto Show.
- **WHEN:** Friday, Feb. 13 to Sunday, Feb. 22.
- **HOURS:** Daily from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Final show from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **WHERE:** Metro Toronto Convention Centre and Rogers Centre.
- **TICKETS:** $20 for adults, $7 for children aged 7-12, children 6 and under free. Multi-day pass $20. Family Pass $40 (2 adults, 2 children 12 and under).
- **CLOSEST SUBWAY:** Union Station, then Skywalk west toward Rogers Centre.
- **PARKING:** Free Parking at Harbourfront Centre on Queen's Quay and Lower Simcoe. Shuttle bus service runs entire length of show.

Top 5 debuts

- **NISSAN NV 2500: This is a world debut of Nissan's first in a new line of commercial vehicles that's set to challenge the likes of Ford and General Motors. Expect something similar to the Dodge Sprinter in concept, meaning smaller engines and flexible sizing.**

- **TOYOTA PRIUS/LEXUS HS250: Canadian debuts of Toyota's latest pair of hybrid sedans. Prius hasn't altered its look too much from last generation, but power and fuel economy are both improved. Upscale Lexus HS250 will be the first dedicated luxury hybrid model.**

- **VOLKSWAGEN GOLF: Latest generation of VW's venerable hatchback has been on sale in Europe for a few months, but this will be our first up-close look. More a facelift than a complete redesign, no word yet on what engines will be available for Canada.**
- **CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY EV: Perhaps a little wishful thinking on Chrysler's part, but a plug-in hybrid version of the legendary Windsor, Ont.-built minivans would make sense in Canada.**

- **FORD TAURUS: From staid to stunning, the new Ford Taurus is the result of Ford's promise to improve its car-based offerings. Will offer the company's new EcoBoost engines, and is said to revive the SHO badge of the late '80s.**

MARK ATKINSON/
FOR METRO CANADA

For continued coverage of the Canadian International Auto Show, visit metronews.ca

How cool is the ICE?

The internal combustion engine (ICE) is under siege. Fuel cells on the west flank. Electric motors on the east. A coalition of various vegetarian contenders stealthily sneaking up from every other direction.

But, as it turns out, the internal combustion engine seems to thrive on siege, like it might be good, hearty soup. Inventors have been trying to topple it over, for about 100 years or so now, with very limited success. And now that the ICE must constantly battle in a green-mad world, it grows only stronger, and more able to withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous alternatives.

To back up this theorem (such as it is), I give you five exhibits from the 2009 Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto:

- The all-new 2010 Chevrolet Equinox is the first GM vehicle to be powered by the automaker's all-new 2.4-litre Direct Injection (DI) four-cylinder engine. As many of you know, in a DI engine the fuel and air are injected directly into the combustion chamber (as opposed to upstream in the intake system). This allows engineers to control the burn with NASA-like precision, for superior everything — power, torque, efficiency, cleanliness, drive-ability, etc. (If it had feet it would even dance better.) The cool thing about this Chevy application is that we're talking mainstream domestic, instead of upstream European, where you find most DI power plants.
- The all-new Honda Insight is a hybrid, yes, but its 1.3-litre SOHC aluminum-alloy i-VTEC "four" is a brilliant example of how an ICE can be tailored to meet the task at hand, which in this application, is being the fuel-miserly soul mate to an electric motor. It is completely optimized for fuel efficiency, featuring, among other items, cylinder de-activation and auto start-stop.
- The new 2010 Audi A3 TDI is another clean diesel. These new-generation diesel power plants, using low-sulpher diesel fuel, are killer.
- The new 2010 Nissan Cube is a ride in the small-is-cool school of design (like Mini, Smart, Beetle, etc.). If this fashion trend continues it will encourage us to celebrate and desire ICEs at the smaller end of the scale – and that will keep them relevant.
- The 2010 Jaguar XFR celebrates the ICE at the bigger end of the scale. Its all-new-from-the-ground-up 5.0-litre V8, features the world's first spray-guided direct injection system, and twin "Eaton" type superchargers. The blowers crank the V8's output to 510 hp and 461 lb-ft of torque. As the kids say, that's sic.

The all-new 2010 Chevrolet Equinox, to be exhibited at the Toronto auto show, is the first GM vehicle to be powered by the automaker's all-new 2.4-litre Direct Injection (DI) four-cylinder engine.

The internal combustion engine seems to thrive on siege, like it might be good, hearty soup. Inventors have been trying to topple it over, for about 100 years or so now, with very limited success.

Which reminds us of another reason for keeping the ICE alive — for the children. Let's do it for the children. Let's not deprive future generations of what it feels and sounds like to have eight large pistons popping at 6,000 rpm and reporting through a low-restrictive dual exhaust system. It's only fair.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more than 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

Green thinking rules show concepts

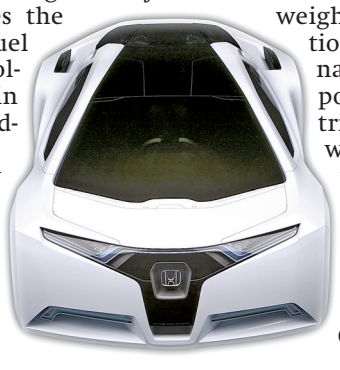
MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

While concept vehicles usually run high on emotional appeal and head-in-the-clouds thinking, this year there's very little in the way of impossible technology in the five concepts that will be in attendance at the 2009 Canadian International Auto Show, running Feb. 13-22 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

In fact, of the five vehicles to be exhibited, four feature some sort of 'green' technology, reflecting the current consumer demand for more environmentally friendly options.

HONDA FC SPORT CONCEPT

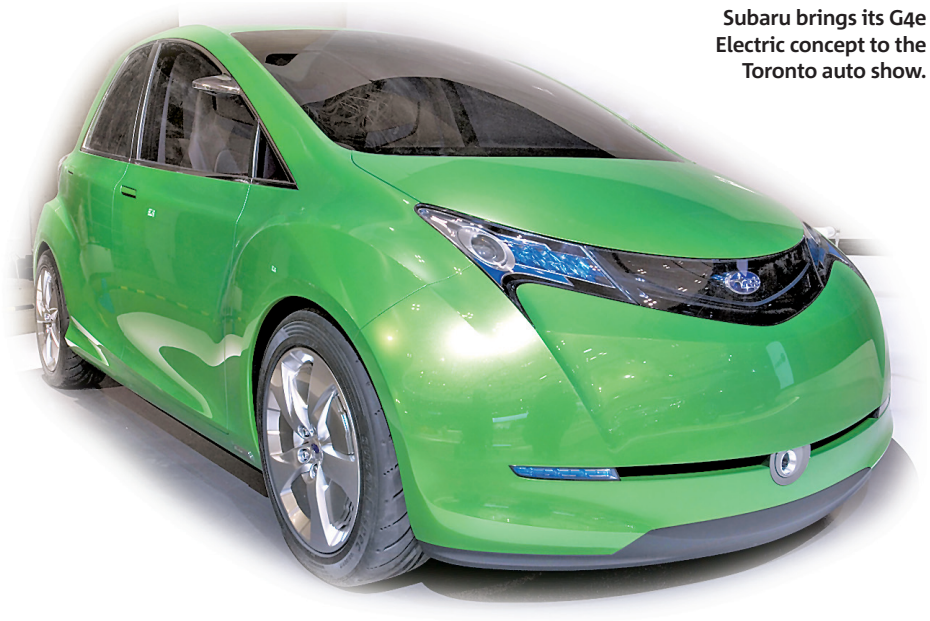
Honda is bringing its FC Sport Design Study, which takes the hydrogen fuel cell technology found in the limited-production FCX Clarity sedan and stuffs it into something slimmer, sleeker and sexier.



The Honda FC Sport concept

The company promises supercar levels of performance thanks to low weight, an attention to aerodynamics and powerful electric motors, all with no tailpipe emissions.

Likelihood of production: Poor, unless you're in California.



Subaru brings its G4e Electric concept to the Toronto auto show.

BMW 7 SERIES ACTIVE HYBRID

The concept most likely to hit dealerships soon, and will be the first challenger to the Lexus LS 600h L in the flagship-hybrid sweepstakes. However, unlike the Lexus, the BMW is what's called a 'mild' hybrid, meaning it only has small 'helper' battery to give a modest boost in power and economy. Still, the ActiveHybrid will reduce fuel consumption and emissions by 15 per cent compared to a regular engine.

Likelihood of production: Excellent.

MITSUBISHI MIEV

The Mitsubishi MiEV is another concept that relies on electricity to motivate itself, however this time it uses traditional lithium-ion batteries and an electric motor, and can be plugged in overnight to recharge. It's based on the company's "i" commuter car and should have a range of between 130 and 160 km before running out of juice.

Likelihood of production: Excellent ... in Japan.

NISSAN FORUM CONCEPT

While Nissan is quietly putting its Quest minivan out to pasture, it will show the FORUM Concept, which is what the company calls "the next revolution in family transportation."

The FORUM includes a raft of neat electronics from the audio experts at BOSE, while the most unique feature is a second-row seat that can rotate 180 degrees to face the three-seat rear bench.

Likelihood of production: Maybe.

SUBARU G4E ELECTRIC

Finally, the Subaru G4e electric concept vehicle's wedge-shaped design is wrapped around a five-passenger cabin. Power comes from next-generation lithium-ion battery, which the company says allows the G4e to travel about 200 km.

The batteries can be fully recharged in about eight hours, or to 80 per cent capacity with a quick 15-minute charge.

Likelihood of production: Maybe.

Kia sets prices for new Soul

MODEL Kia Canada Inc. recently announced the pricing for the all new 2010 Soul urban crossover vehicle, set to go on sale this month. The car will also be showcased at the Canadian International Auto Show, which kicks off in Toronto this Friday.

The base model will start at $15,495, and will feature a 1.6 litre 122 horsepower four cylinder engine and a five speed manual transmission, with available manual air conditioning. Standard features include six airbags, power locks, windows and heated mirrors; AM/FM/CD/MP3 stereo with AUX and USB input ports, Bluetooth(R) hands free connectivity, steering wheel mounted audio controls, heated seats and more.

The Soul 2u adds a 2.0 litre four cylinder engine producing 142 horsepower. With an MSRP of $17,995, the Soul 2u with manual transmission includes 16-inch alloy wheels, four wheel disc brakes, Anti-lock brakes (ABS), Electronic Stability Control (ESC), deep tint privacy glass, roof rails, cruise control, "Soul" patterned seat cloth, keyless entry with panic alarm and air conditioning.

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A 50th anniversary edition of Corvette, such as the one above, will be displayed at the Castrol Corevette exhibit at the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto.

Exhibit an eyeful for Corvette fans

MARK ATKINSON
for Metro Canada

Since its introduction in 1953, the Chevrolet Corvette has proven to be one of the most popular and recognizable sports cars in North America. And while there have been highs and lows in more than a half century of production, it is still a grand affair every time a new model is introduced.

For decades, Corvette always married good looks with relatively inexpensive price tags, meaning it has more of a blue-collar history compared to some more sophisticated European sports cars.

Corvette is being celebrated in a masterful way at the 2009 Canadian International Auto Show, as Castrol has assembled an exclusive collection of 25 historically significant models for public viewing. Starting with an example of the first generation from 1953, called C1, straight through to versions of the modern C6, there will be enough eye candy for even the most ardent Corvette fanatic.

Other impressive pieces coming to Toronto include the Mako Shark 1 and Manta Ray, the show-car concepts created to preview the C2 and C3 styling changes, special versions to commemorate the 40th and 50th years of production, along with four versions of the Corvette that paced the Indianapolis 500 in 1978, '86, '98 and '07.

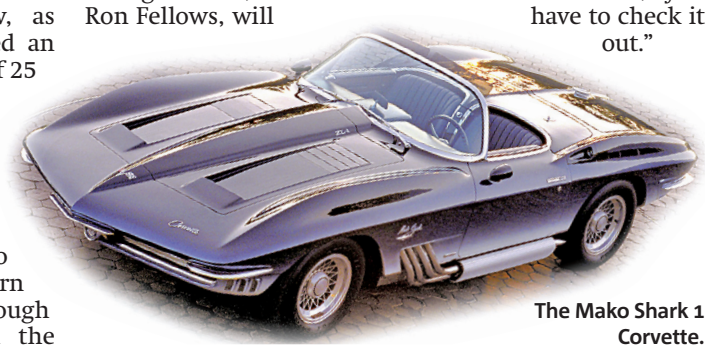
Also, factory Corvette racing driver, Canadian Ron Fellows, will not only have his special-edition Z06 on display, but he'll be on hand at various points during the show to take questions and sign autographs.

The Corvette Club of Ontario (CCO) was responsible for organizing the display, including members supplying most of the show vehicles from their own collections. It also coordinated with neighbouring clubs to help fill in some of the gaps.

CCO Vice President Don Fraser is understandably proud of the work done on the showcase, saying "Every car there has some historical significance. We'll have members there to answer questions and let the public know just what they're looking at. If you're a die-hard GM fan, you have to check it out."

Location

• The Castrol Corvette display will be located in the History Room, next to the Cruise Nationals display on the 700 level of the Convention Centre's South Building.



The Mako Shark 1 Corvette.

Program rewards green choice

INSURANCE More Canadian drivers are choosing hybrid vehicles. Auto manufacturers realize different types of hybrids are in demand and are introducing many new models to satisfy a growing consumer appetite for hybrid vehicles that fit their lifestyle. And while all hybrid vehicles help save the environment, they can also help save money too.

To enhance the affordability of driving a hybrid, insurance companies are coming up with innovative solutions to reward environmentally-conscious drivers. For example, new insurance programs are rewarding drivers who own or lease hybrid vehicles by offering discounts on auto insurance premiums.

An example is the Green Wheels Program from TD Insurance which rewards those who own or lease hybrid vehicles by offering a five to ten per cent discount on auto insurance premiums.

"Our enrolment numbers for the TD Green Wheels Program tell us that we've tapped into a huge shift in consumer attitudes about cars, costs and carbon footprints," says Jean-Francois Tougas, vice president, TD Insurance Home and Auto. "We wanted to respond to this shift by rewarding customers for green behaviour.

"TD Insurance is constantly looking to give back to the environment in ways that make sense," adds Tougas. "Rewarding consumers who purchase or lease vehicles based on their environmental impact was a simple decision based on three factors – good for the consumer, good for the environment and good for our business."

NEWS CANADA

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Baby Benz on a budget

BRADLEY HORN
for Metro Canada

The Mercedes Benz B-Class

MONCTON, New Brunswick — Why did Mercedes-Benz choose Moncton as the venue to launch it face-lifted five-door hatch? Because it's the "New B" in New Brunswick! Get it? No? Okay, so the Germans are far better at engineering than cracking jokes.

Actually, that Teutonic technical savvy has been a big part of M-B Canada's message in convincing cash-conscious Canadians that its $30,000 B-Class Compact Sports Tourer is worth spending a little extra coin on.

You see, for all the Audi A3s, Volvo V50s and Mini Clubmans the Benz has been shopped against since bowing into Canada in 2005 (but not the U.S.), it's also rolled in with the considerably less expensive Pontiac Vibe, Mazda5 and Kia Rondo crowd too.

So why spend the extra moolah? Well, admittedly that three-pointed star on the hood carries a lot of cache, but Chris Goczan, the B's product manager, says the badge also brings the automaker's reputation for safety, comfort and road manners.

The front-drive Benz shares a platform with its Euro-only cousin, the A-Class, both employing "sandwich" construction. No, not a German panini press, but a clever way of installing the four-cylinder engine almost on its side, so that in a front-end collision it's forced under, and not into, the passenger cabin.

Standard on all '09 Bs are ESP, traction control, ABS with brake assist, front, side and side-curtain airbags, active head restraints and a new feature that automatically activates the interior lights in a collision, making the vehicle easier to work on for emergency services.

Cosmetic upgrades on the revised B-Class are minimal: New front and rear bumpers and a new hood, grille and alloy wheels. Customer feedback led to a larger rear window and a revised tailgate handle, too.

Inside, the Benz continues to offer class-leading space versus its physical footprint. The seat cushions, fabrics and trim are revised for 2009, along with a new entertainment/telematic system with a colour display, Bluetooth connectivity, MP3 compatibility and available iPod integration. A 500-watt Harman Kardon system is optional.

The B-Class' height adjustable cargo floor and fold-flat rear seats (with pass-through) remain standard, though Europe's folding front passenger seat is still not allowed in Canada. We're not sure why, as the much smaller Smart Fortwo can perform the trick.

The powertrain in the base B200 remains a 2.0-litre inline-four making a somewhat paltry 134 hp and 136 lb-ft of torque. The B200T lashes a turbo to the engine for a far more spirited 193 hp and 206 lb-ft. Good on Mercedes for keeping a manual gearbox standard too, even though 95 per cent of customers sadly opt for the optional CVT automatic.

All the preceding aside, it's the at-the-wheel experience in the B-Class that justifies its premium sticker. It has that solid, planted, confident feel only the Germans seem to be able to breed into their automobiles. We'd even forgo the $1,500 sport package, as the stock suspension is much more compliant, without being sloppy.

Mercedes Canada has been adding content and lowering the B's price since '05 (the first base model was 30K-plus and wore hub-caps, black door handles, etc.)

For 2009, the base model's price is unchanged at $29,900, while the Turbo jumps slightly to $34,400.

2009 Mercedes Benz B-Class

Type: Compact
Price: from $29,900
Engine: 2.0-litre inline-four
HP: 134
Torque: 136 lb-ft

Highlights

- Mercedes luxury at an affordable price
- Solid feel at the driving wheel

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Citroen makeover at Geneva show

BRAND The car industry might be having a nightmare at the moment, but it's not all bad news. There are plenty of things to look forward to at the Geneva Motor Show that takes place in March.

Expect to see lots of exciting new eco models, which will be not only kinder to the environment, but cheaper to run. There'll be some cool new models to check out, from the convertible Fiat 500 to the RR4 "baby" Rolls-Royce.

One of the most exciting things we're anticipating is the rebranding of Citroen. The French carmaker is presenting its radically revamped image at the show, complete with a brand new 3-D logo and a series of new premium cars wearing the iconic DS badge, this time standing for "Different Spirit."

METRO WORLD NEWS

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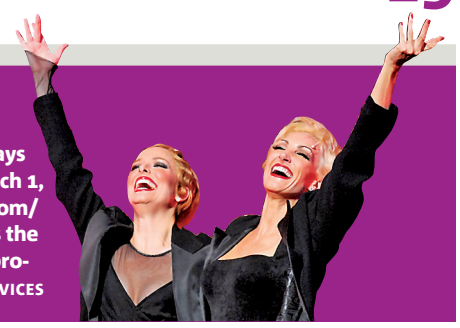
Set your heart racing
If you've already got Olympic fever, here's one way to quell it: Book a run on the Olympia Bob Run in the tony ski resort of St. Moritz, Switzerland. It's the only natural ice bob run in the world, and got its name after hosting the Winter Olympics in 1928 and 1948. See olympia-bobrun.ch. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Travel

NYC theatre deals

New York City tourism officials have trumpeted two new programs in recent days to promote the city's vaunted theatre scene. On the House, from Feb. 15 to March 1, includes two-for-one tickets at more than 30 Off-Broadway shows. Visit nycgo.com/onthehouse for details. Another new microsite, nycgo.com/broadway, provides the latest information about Broadway shows. Close to two dozen new Broadway productions will open in the coming weeks. METRO NEWS SERVICES



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An Olympics like no other

Vancouver tourism operators hope to cash in on unique climate during the Games

Winter Olympics conjure up images of skates and skis, mukluks and mittens. But the 2010 Games are being held in British Columbia, where winter is just as likely to involve golf as it is giant slalom, and local tourism operators are hoping to cash in on the atypical climate.

The fact that people can sail in the morning and ski in the afternoon creates unique options for Olympic spectators.

One Alberta-based company is offering golf on nearby Vancouver Island before or after the Games, along with a stay aboard a cruise ship. Stays on the Norwegian Star start at $2,010 for a four-night stay.

And with around 27,000 hotels rooms available in the Vancouver area and as many as 300,000 visitors expected for the Olympics, travellers just might need to get creative finding a place to stay in 2010.

Though there's just one year until the Games, it's still unclear how many traditional hotel rooms will be available to the public.

"We're finding out as we go, particularly as we get inside a year we'll know more," said Walt Judas, vice-president of marketing for Tourism Vancouver.

More than half of Vancouver's hotel rooms are reserved for the international and local Olympic committees, who have until March to start notifying hotels of how many rooms they'll actually need, though it's not expected that any will be released.

ALBERT NORMANDI/TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

This undated photo shows the downtown Vancouver skyline and boats in the marina on False Creek.

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

Some hotels put aside as much as 75 per cent of their rooms for Olympic officials and media. Athletes and team officials will not be taking up space in hotels as they will be staying at the Olympic village.

"When the Olympics are all over and there is a big bill to pay, people will think 'oh yeah, the hotels are getting a lot of money.' But we aren't," said Zack Bhatia, the vice-president of Mayfair Hotels and Resorts, which owns six hotels in the Vancouver area.

Hotels in the Vancouver area and in Whistler, B.C. were asked to lock in rates during the bid phase for the Games. Those lucky enough to secure a room through the Olympic committee are only paying about 15 per cent more than high-season.

But room rates for the public are much higher.

At a Radisson hotel near the Vancouver airport, rooms during the Olympics will be $599 per night, with a minimum stay of four nights. The regular nightly rate in February is around $150.

On the web

- tourismvancouver.com

But over-charging could leave operators with empty rooms or worse, said Judas.

"The customer that we see in 2010, the visitor that's here for the Games is the same person we want here in 2011 and 2012 and beyond," he said.

"If they think they've been hard done by in any way, or over-charged, we're not going to see them as a repeat customer."

Prices that were already high have climbed into the stratosphere in Whistler, B.C., which will host mountain events for the Games.

Fewer journalists are expected to stay in the mountain resort and the German Olympic delegation has cancelled plans to use the village as its base.

Even with a bad economy, Americans are hungry for 2010 travel packages, said Anbritt Stengele with Sports Traveller, a Chicago-based company specializing in travel to sports events.

"The Olympics is once in a lifetime," said Stengele. "People are looking to still do this trip, but at a lower cost." METRO NEWS SERVICES

RANDY LINCKS/TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

M. DORIGO/TOURISM BRITISH COLUMBIA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The photo above, provided by Tourism British Columbia, shows the Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort in Whistler, where some events will take place during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Meanwhile, the photo below shows people walking on the Capilano Suspension Bridge in North Vancouver.

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Balancing act
Remember the Segway? The zero-emission personal transportation devices are available for a one-hour guided tour through the cobbled streets of San Miguel, Mexico. See segwaymexico.com. METRO WORLD NEWS

Sightseeing in an electric car

ROMINA McGUINNESS
Metro World News

Seeing a city's highlights from an open-top bus crammed with weary tourists is so passé. This 2009 is all about whizzing around on your own personal guided tour in a zero-emission mode of transport — the GPS-guided electric car. Hop in and enjoy the ride.

Touring a new city in a GPS-guided, zero-emission electric car is an eco-friendly way to sightsee that's also a welcome departure from being packed into a standard-issue tour bus.

Electric Time Car Rentals, San Francisco

Electric Time cars are the eco- and leg-friendly way to crawl up and zoom down the notoriously steep streets of San Francisco. On board your cute little electric vehicle, your guide is an audio GPS system that shows you the city's sights. Choose one of three routes and discover the city at your desired pace.

From the Japanese Tea Gardens to the overwhelming Golden Gate Bridge, this audio tour is a fun way to spend a sunny afternoon cruising around the city. From about $50/hour, et cars.com.

GoCar Tours, Barcelona

Scan the sights of Europe's quirkiest capital behind the wheel of your yellow GoCar, an open-topped mini electric car with integrated GPS and a unique storytelling audio guide. The GPS ensures you don't get lost while the audio guide gives lectures similar to those of a traditional tour, minus the herd-like experience. From the multi coloured Boqueria Market over to Gaudi's magical unfinished Sagrada Familia cathedral, Barcelona is there for you to discover.

Throughout 2009, head to the Hotel Miramar, which in association with GoCars is offering a hot new "deal on wheels." This two-night package includes a five-star hotel suite and use of the GoCar throughout the day, from about $830; ac-hotels.com. Otherwise, GoCars cost about $55 for an hour; gocartours.es.

Bi-Partisan Tour Company, Washington DC

Show your allegiance with this alternative way to see Washington, D.C. The Bi-Partisan Tour Company, provides politically-driven tours in mini-electric cars. Get to know the federal city and if you're feeling eccentric, toot the horn — an elephant trumpeting for the Republicans or a braying donkey for the Democrats.

You can even wear a rubber mask representing your favorite political figure — although this may obscure your vision when it comes to seeing the White House or the monuments of the Mall from your car. From about $50/hour, bi-partisan tourcompany.com.

Marburg fever case serves as a warning to global travellers

COLORADO A Colorado woman who contracted Marburg fever while in Uganda should serve as a reminder to health-care workers that diseases that were once just exotic names in medical textbooks can show up in emergency departments in North American hospitals, experts say.

The speed of global travel and the popularity of adventure tourism combine to increase the risk that bad bugs can travel from their homes to ours, they warn.

"Most of the time when you hear hoof beats in the infectious disease world, it really is likely a neighbourhood horse," said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

"But there are those rare and ever-growing chances that it could be a zebra. And unless we stay vigilant to that point, if it is a zebra, one day you could be in a big amount of trouble."

Fortunately, the unusual year-old Marburg case — which came to light on the weekend — did not end tragically. The woman, who is the first reported case of the fever in North America, survived and appears not to have infected any of her caregivers.

She is thought to have been infected in December 2007, while touring an attraction known as the python cave in the Maramagambo forest of Queen Elizabeth Park in western Uganda. The cave is home to thousands of bats; some species of bats are thought to be the reservoir of the Marburg virus.

She became ill about two weeks later, after returning to Colorado. (The incubation period for the disease ranges from two to 21 days.) But it wasn't until a year later, in January 2009, that it was confirmed the women had suffered from Marburg.

Diagnosing the disease isn't always straightforward. While the tell-tale sign seen in the worst cases — blood gushing from multiple orifices — would immediately bring hemorrhagic fevers to mind, only about half of cases develop that symptom, said Dr. Eileen Farnon, chief of epidemiology in the special pathogens branch of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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End of an era

A beloved century-old gift shop at the popular South Rim of the Grand Canyon has been converted into a visitor centre. The family-owned Verkamp's Curios opened in 1906 and was run by three different generations before closing in September. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Winter camping: No bugs, but bitter cold

In the dead of winter, when many Canadians flock south to warm, tropical beaches, Hans Hogers heads in the opposite direction, seeking isolation in the dark, frigid wilderness.

OUTWARD BOUND CANADA

A participant in Outward Bound Canada's dog sled tours enjoying winter camping in Algonquin Provincial Park in January 2008.

The information technology manager leaves his Toronto home for a remote forest in northern Ontario and spends a week braving -30 C wind chills with only a small tent and sleeping bag for protection. He eschews organized tours or formal camps, preferring the challenge of facing nature with just a friend, some warm clothing, snowshoes and a few basic necessities he can carry on his back.

It's physically demanding, and dangerous for those who are not properly prepared for the skin-freezing weather, but winter camping enthusiasts say the experience leaves them with a Zen-like, peaceful state of mind.

"There's something about knowing that you're the only people out there. It's like being on another planet," Hogers said.

"In everyday life, we have huge to-do lists ... and you've got a whole bunch of stuff on the go all the time, and you're always multi-tasking. When you're winter camping, you're not multi-tasking."

Hogers won't reveal his secret location, saying only that it is on unoccupied Crown land far from any community. He and his companion walk miles away from any railway or road to ensure they are truly on their own.

If a medical emergency arises, it could take hours to get back to a spot where they might find help, and hours more to flag down a car or train on roads and railways that are nearly deserted.

Hogers' annual trek is among the more extreme examples of winter camping. Across Canada, there are organized tours that range from the somewhat cushy to bare-bones survival challenges.

In Algonquin Provincial Park, some 250 kilometres north of Toronto, Outward Bound Canada offers multi-day dog sled tours which allow participants to spend their nights in large, walled canvas tents that contain a wood stove.

"Initially, people are a bit intimidated by the cold and the winter season, and they wonder how they'll adapt to the conditions," said executive director Dave Wolfenden.

"But they soon realize they can sleep outside quite comfortably with the right kind of sleeping bag."

As the campers gain confidence, many decide by the second night that even the small comfort of the tent is too refined and sleep under the open sky in the dog sleds.

"The dogs are kind of gathered around and they're howling at night, and there are wolves throughout Algonquin park, so they often howl at night in response to the dogs," Wolfenden said. "It's quite magical."

Outward Bound Canada offers a three-day, two-night package for $595 per person, including training, food and special clothing designed to withstand the winter chill.

North of Quebec City, the Pourvoirie Du Lac-Beauport offers dog sled, snowshoe and snowmobile tours with overnight stays in either an igloo or a large prospector's tent close to the community.

The outfitter's snowshoe package with one overnight stay costs $100, while a two-night snowmobile package costs $395.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

- Outward Bound Canada: outwardbound.ca
- Pourvoirie du Lac-Beauport: quebecweb.com/plb/

All prices per person, one way and are subject to availability. Check website for terms and conditions. Prices correct at time of going to press. E&OE.

Baltimore goes to the circus
An exhibit of circus-related works by Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Klee and more will be at the Baltimore Museum of Art from Feb. 22 to May 17. See artbma.org. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

FAIRMONT HOTELS

Suite 1742 at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal.

Montreal hotel celebrates 40th anniversary of Lennon's bed-in

MONTREAL Suite 1742 at the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth in Montreal is no ordinary hotel room. On the door, just below the suite number, there's a silver plaque bearing the names John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

It was here, 40 years ago — from May 26 to June 2, 1969 — that the ex-Beatle and his wife held their famous Bed-In for Peace during the Vietnam War. They spoke to journalists to promote their message of world peace and recorded the song Give Peace a Chance in the suite.

The hotel is inviting guests to mark the anniversary with a package that includes one night's accommodation and breakfast in bed for two (or a restaurant buffet breakfast if preferred). Guests also receive a CD featuring Give Peace a Chance and a frameable copy of the song's lyrics.

The Imagine package, offered between March 1 to June 21, starts at $599 per night (double occupancy) for suite 1742, subject to availability, or $199 for a regular room.

While the suite has been refurbished many times since the historic occasion, its walls feature memorabilia including press articles, framed gold records of Give Peace a Chance and pictures of Lennon and Ono. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Ontario outings

Wine and chocolate festival

• When's the last time you indulged in chocolate without feeling guilty? You only live once, so don't be a stickler — head to Niagara-on-the-Lake's Days of Wine and Chocolate festival, which takes place this weekend and next. For $50, you'll be guided through 20 local wineries, sampling expert pairings of VQA wine and decadent chocolate at each stop. Shuttle bus service between wineries is included. Visit wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com for more information. And remember: It's not a binge if it's planned.

Documentary film festival

• To celebrate Black History Month, Grey County is continuing its annual tradition of hosting the Black History Month Documentary Film Festival. The Grey Roots museum, located just outside of Owen Sound, Ont., will be the venue. The film Dresden Story will be shown this Saturday and Sunday, and Voice of the Fugitive will play next Saturday and Sunday. Each film is free with admission to the museum, and prices range from $3.50 per child to $18 for a family. More information is available at greyroots.com.

Winterama

• If you've grown weary of all those Negative Nellies who keep moaning about the downside of winter, jump on the Positive Patty train and begin embracing the season. The people of Penetanguishene, Ont., are your conductors, and having hosted 60th annual Winterama festivals to date, it's clear they're experts at having fun in the snow. The winter celebration runs from Friday, Feb. 20 to Sunday, Feb. 22 and visitors can enjoy a winter parade, polar plunge, a petting zoo, wagon and pony rides, cardboard toboggan races, a professional lumberjack show, arm wrestling competitions for kids and adults, musical entertainment and more. Additional details about Winterama are at penetanguishene.ca.

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The buzz on a unique tourism draw

TheTravelJunkie

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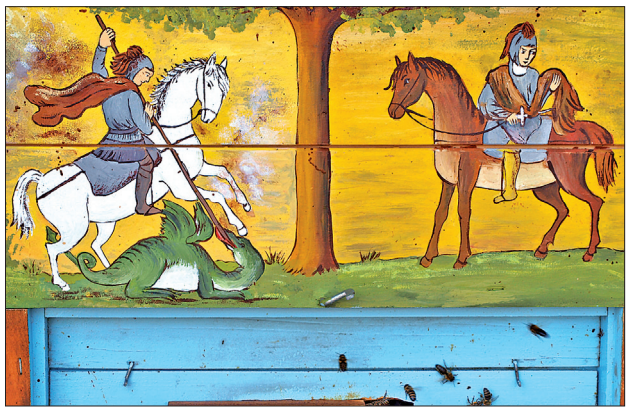
Janes Gregori, a member of the Slovenian Beekeepers Association, samples locally made honey wine.



JULIA DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Hive panels depict historical events, religious iconography and satirical village life. Slovenian beekeepers started painting the hives in the mid-1700s to help distinguish between colonies.

Some corners of the world entice visitors by establishing self-guided wine-country routes, but Slovenia wants you to take a road trip along a trail of beekeeping sites.

Dubbed beekeeping tourism, this relatively new initiative invites travellers to drive across the Central European countryside, stopping along a trail of specialty farms for a behind-the-scenes look at the honey industry.

In Slovenia, the art of beekeeping is so celebrated that its referred to as "the poetry of agriculture." Its one of the area's oldest rural activities, and with an estimated four beekeepers for every 1,000 Slovenians, it remains an integral part of the nations culture. "To be Slovenian is to be a beekeeper," goes a popular saying.

While there are plenty of agricultural farms and bee-related museums to visit, the best place to start your tour is the 130-year old beekeeping association, just an hour's drive from the capital city. There, I met Janes Gregori, a 66-year-old former biologist and member of the Slovenian Beekeepers Association, who shared a swarm of information about his craft.

In the mid-1700s, he says, beekeepers started painting the front of their hives to help distinguish between colonies. Hive panels have intricately decorated wooden fronts that depict historical events, religious iconography and satirical village life. It's a tradition that continues today.

I learned that Slovenia is home to its own race of bees called the Carniolan. This endemic species (now exported all over the world) is legally protected and is known for its gentle character, and hard-working nature.

Janes explained that global bee populations are dwindling. But while colonies may be in jeopardy elsewhere in the world, they sure seem to be flourishing in Slovenia.

Flying frantically around Janes, the bees didn't seem too pleased that he was disturbing their hive. He held out a panel covered with vibrating bees, dancing in perfect figure-eights around the rims of their hexagon home. Bees can smell fear so "it's important to be very calm when handling them," Janes told me, admitting that he's been stung thousands of times.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing Sundays at 8:30 p.m. EST on OLN; juliadimon.com.

Word Travels

- Catch the second season of Word Travels, a documentary series that follows the real-life adventures of travel writers Julia Dimon and Robin Esrock. It airs Sundays at 8:30 p.m. EST on OLN.

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Universal Studios reborn
Visitors touring Universal Studios Hollywood next summer will see the new movie sets now being built to replace fire-damaged locations. Roofers accidentally started the fire June 1. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Destination: Romance

AMBER BELLAIRE
for Metro Canada

Forget Paris and Venice — with a little imagination, you'll find that Canada boasts plenty of locations to inspire lovers.

If you can't find a romantic spot in Canada, you're not trying.

Valentine's**Day**

Ontario
Many package deals can be found for Valentine's Day visits to Niagara Falls, but if you're looking for something a little more private, and a lot more original, take hold of your lover's hand — and heart — and climb to the top of Ontario's highest point of land.

Temagami, in northeastern Ontario, is home to Caribou Mountain, a large hill with a steep cliff. It may not be the Rockies, but the region is home to a lake and forest, non-commercialized and indisputably private — a 2006 Statistics Canada report put Temagami's population at less than 1,000.

While a significant part of the area is home to an First Nations community, there's a provincial park with nearby cottages welcoming tourists.

Quebec
The ability to speak French is of course very sexy, but you don't have to be Pepe Le Pew to bring that extra bit of distinction to your Valentine's Day dinner. In Quebec City, you can treat your partner to a horse-drawn carriage ride down cobblestone streets and past 17th century architecture that's just dripping with European flair.

British Columbia
Money can't buy you love but it can sure pay for some fabulously romantic outings. Victoria's one of Canada's most expensive cities, but it's also one of its classiest, most historical and most scenic.

We all know that men love visuals and women love substance, and this city has both. Winter weather in Victoria is relatively mild, so you and your sweetie can attempt to stroll hand and hand along the coastal waters.

Nova Scotia
Dating one of those people who always thinks they're right? Check out Digby, N.S., which has a population of 2,300 and coastal waters as clear as champagne. Its residents consider it to be the most romantic town in Canada — and they have an excellent case, but you'll never know for sure unless you go.

Alberta
Set the sights for your relationship high while gazing at the Rockies. Show how deep your love is by diving into one of Banff's many hot springs. Taking time out to appreciate natural phenomena can remind couples how nice it is to have someone with whom to share the wonder of life.

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Phoenix 5-Star $799
Fairmont Scottsdale + taxes & fees $253
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Holiday Inn Sunspree + taxes & fees $227
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New guide covers an array of Caribbean diving sites

If you're planning a spring break or summer trip to go diving in the Caribbean, a new guide called Scuba Caribbean could help you explore new destinations.

The book, by Mary Peachin, has a section on Mexico's Caribbean coastline, including Quintana Roo, Cozumel, Cancun, Rivera Maya and Cenotes of the Yucatan, as well as chapters on more than two dozen islands.

The latter include Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Cayman Islands, the U.S. and British Virgin Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Martinique, Montserrat, St. Lucia, Grenada, Barbados, Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Martin, the Bahamas and Bermuda.

The book also includes a section on Central and South American destinations with Caribbean coastlines — Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela's Los Roques Archipelago.

Scuba Caribbean notes that "the region's diving is as diverse as the islands themselves. Below the sea, an underwater photographer's wonderland of colourful reefs and marine diversity awaits."

Terrain ranges from "steep, bottomless walls" to "cliff overhangs, caverns and swim-throughs."

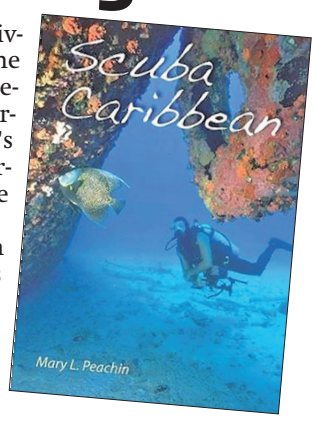
Some areas offer visibility greater than 30 metres but Peachin writes that low-visibility areas, often rich in plankton, may offer have their own attractions, attracting whale sharks and manta rays.

Other underwater attractions: Shipwrecks, diving with trained dolphins and watching migrations of whales and other sea creatures.

Each chapter includes a general description of the destination's history and some basic facts, along with a list of diving spots.

In Jamaica, for example, which the book says is "surrounded by shallow water, which does provide the depth and terrain for more interesting diving," recommended dive sites include Airport Wall, The Pit and Windowmaker's Cave near Montego Bay; The Arches, Deep Plane, gallery and Throne Room near Negril; and Prospect Reef, Sting Ray City and the Ocho Rios Drop-Off near Ocho Rios.

The book is published by the University Press of Florida. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Scuba Caribbean (University of Florida Press) by Mary Peachin is available for $19.25 through amazon.ca.

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Are you bloated or retaining water?	■	■
Mental cloudiness?	■	■
Is your skin getting bad?	■	■

These symptoms above are some of the most common signs of toxic overload, and detoxing once or twice a year is often recommended as a solution. In a recent study of 116 women in the UK, 70% were satisfied or very satisfied with the results from their Biofirm detox.

I unjunked my body!

Lina works in the fitness industry in Ottawa and recently came across an article on detoxing. Here is her story;

"I was having a hard time losing those stubborn extra pounds and I was tired a lot, which showed in my face. So when I came across a Biofirm story in the local newspaper, it made me curious.

It definitely made sense to me that we get tired and bloated from too many toxins in our foods and from our environment. But I didn't know that it made us gain weight! So I purchased a box of Biofirm and took the recommended 6 tablets a day for a month with lots of water and high-fibre foods. I was determined to unjunk my body!"

I lost 11 pounds on the detox!

"In the first 4 weeks I lost 7 pounds. I definitely felt lighter and my skin was looking great – I was glowing! I had read that it could be unpleasant to take Biofirm but I actually enjoyed it, especially because you are still able to do your daily duties. You don't have to stay home or do it on the weekends.

After the 30 days detox, I wanted to continue, so I bought another 14 days of tablets. Again, I lost another 4 pounds and my clothes were getting very loose! I was thrilled - and the great part is that I didn't have to exercise vigorously for 6 weeks!!"

– Line B., Ottawa

DETOXING: A GREAT WAY TO START A HEALTHIER LIFE

Everyday, our bodies are exposed to toxins from the air we breathe, the water we drink and especially the processed foods we eat. If our bodies get overburden with toxins, our liver suffers and we start seeing the effect on our health; Our skin is affected, we get tired, we retain water, get headaches, digestion problems, bad breath and find it especially hard to lose weight.

Researchers have now discovered the biological cause of those stubborn pounds; Toxic particles bind water in the bodies' soft tissue and inhibit your metabolism from burning fat efficiently. The Conclusion: To lose weight, you must first cleanse your body!

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Metro Workology exclusive: Matters of the Heart
Don't miss Matters of the Heart, Metro's exclusive feature series in the Workology section. There are jobs to be had that focus on falling in love, falling out of love and everything in between; so check for Workology and Metronews.ca/work as well.

Workology

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Chocolatey goodness

Matters of the Heart

NOELLE MUNARETTO
for Metro Canada

It may not be as outlandish as Willy Wonka's factory, but David Castellan's boutique, Soma Chocolate, is chock full of treats that would no doubt tempt anyone with a persistent sweet tooth.

Castellan is one of the few chocolate makers in Toronto who produces his chocolate in-house straight from the bitter bean.

For most people who think that chocolate comes from the corner store, the traditional chocolate making process can seem finicky and time-consuming. The result, however, is chocolate in its purest and astiest state.

Though Castellan initially began his career as a pastry chef after graduating from George Brown College, he became further intrigued by chocolate while taking a course in California.

"We made little batches of chocolate right from cocoa beans and then I thought that this would make a cool little business," says Castellan.

After returning to Toronto, he left his executive pastry chef position with Oliver Bonacini restaurants to pursue chocolate making full time. Along with his wife, designer Cynthia Leung, he purchased a store in the city's historic Distillery District.

NOELLE MUNARETTO/FOR METRO CANADA

David Castellan, a former pastry chef, owns the specialty chocolate shop, Soma Chocolate, in the Distillery District.

In 2005, Soma outgrew the original space and now occupies a larger unit in the district. The highlight of the new shop is the glassed-in prep-area that lets customers watch how chocolate is made.

"We put even more of an effort to make it a chocolate destination. It's all about chocolate and nothing else," says Castellan. "We've created a place to experience chocolate in every form."

Sue DeGrandis was among a handful of people who first brought high-quality European chocolate to Toronto stores in the mid 1990s. As the owner of Daniel le Chocolat Belge, she's tapped into the entrepreneurial side of the specialty chocolate shop business by offering her customers natural, gluten-free and organic Belgian products.

"I always, always wanted to be my own entrepreneur and I hadn't found the right venue that inspired me," says DeGrandis, who spent her childhood on her family's 300-year-old cocoa plantation in St. Lucia, in the West Indies. "There wasn't a quality product available here (in North America.) People were eating chocolate as a candy and not as chocolate."

The increasing number of high-quality chocolate stores popping up around the city means people aren't just interested in eating good chocolate, but they're interested in crafting it too.

Chef Laura Bryan is a professor of baking and patisserie arts at George Brown College. She says that this fall the college is set to launch a continuing education certificate program in chocolate making in addition to its existing con-ed chocolate courses.

"Chocolate making is a marriage of skill, creativity and artistry," says Bryan. "It's going to be great for people who are in the business or who are new to the business to come and learn some skills and techniques to develop their chocolate work."

Making chocolate

- 1: Cocoa beans are gently pre-roasted at around 100C and then roasted again at 240C.
- 2: Roasted beans are ground down into combination of nibs and husks — the husks are disgarded.
- 3: The nibs are crushed by giant stone wheels to form a dense paste. After 24 hours, spices and flavourings can be added.
- 4: Cocoa butter (making the paste liquid and smooth) gets added to the mixture.
- 5: A tempering machine aligns the fat crystals in the cocoa butter while rendering the chocolate glossy and workable.

–NOELLE MUNARETTO

For more Matters of the Heart exclusive series check the Workology section Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays or stop by Metronews.ca/work

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Cellular college trend

A number of American schools are looking into delivering courses in real time on mobile phones, complete with student chat rooms, faculty voiceovers, and self-paced tutorials. METRO NEWS SERVICES

After hours BlackBerry use may lead you to a lawsuit

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin

dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com

When does the workday begin and when does it end? This is the question being put to judges across the country as lawsuits for unpaid overtime make their way through the courts. And it will continue to garner attention as our reliance on the electronic workplace, replete with BlackBerrys, home offices and remote access, ensures that the office no longer has traditional borders.

Pay for overtime worked is governed by differing employment standards legislation across the country. In Ontario, for example, while there is no daily overtime pay requirement, employers must pay time and a half for employees who work in excess of 44 hours in any week. While each jurisdiction has its own exceptions, such as managerial employees, professionals, such as lawyers and accountants, and IT employees, most workplaces are required to pay overtime to the majority of the workforce.

Although many overtime eligible employees are not specifically asked to work any extra time, the legislation is uniformly interpreted as placing the onus on employers to disprove these claims. This raises two issues. First, where an employer permits an employee, even indirectly, to work beyond the maximum amount of hours, it will be liable to pay him or her overtime pay. This is so even if the employee was not specifically requested to work after hours. By permitting an employee to stay at work or providing remote access to the workplace after hours, it has essentially allowed him or her to continue to work. In other cases, the employee is often assigned so much work, the employer will be deemed to have requested that the employee actually work longer hours.

Second, the legislation generally requires that employers maintain their own records of the time that their employees spend at work. Most employers fail to do so. Therefore, if there is an overtime dispute before a provincial tribunal, the employee's evidence of hours worked, which can be flimsy and generally based on recollection, may be sufficient for him or her to prevail.

Even where overtime statutes do not apply to a particular employee, the employer may still be liable to pay for extra time worked. Many employment contracts or workplace policies set out a daily or weekly expectation of time worked for salaried employees. Such statements, when found in a contract or manual, essentially create a promise that employees who routinely exceed these maximums will be paid for that time.

As well, while BlackBerrys are seldom used exclusively for business purposes, that alone does not render employers immune from overtime claims based on their use. Employees routinely fire off business emails from home, on public transit and even on vacation. When an employer supplies the device and then permits its employees to perform work-related duties outside of normal working hours, it has essentially asked that overtime work be performed. And with the dawn of overtime class action lawsuits already upon us, it won't be long before these claims begin to include BlackBerry use as a component of an employee's total time worked.

In light of the times, here is my advice to Canadian workplaces struggling to adapt:

- Review and revise employment policies and ensure that employees are not permitted to work overtime without the express consent to do so.
- Implement systems to monitor overtime worked and preserve the records of such time.
- Seek counsel to ensure that the specific overtime rules are understood and are attentively followed.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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Investment in college infrastructure needed
Colleges Ontario is calling on the provincial government to follow the lead of its federal counterpart and make college infrastructure funding a priority in this year's budget. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Job losses, downsizing lead workers back to books for new careers

He had all the comforts and perks one would expect after nearly two decades on the job: A reliable income, benefits and five weeks vacation.

There was only one problem: Larry Epp wasn't enjoying the work.

He had studied theatre arts many years ago and tried to make it as an actor but the absence of a steady paycheque lost its allure.

What started as a temporary assignment with an insurance company ended up lasting 18 years as Epp took on different roles over time — first as an entry-level data input clerk and eventually moving on to desktop publishing and graphic design.

But a couple of years ago, the cuts started. After twice dodging the axe, it eventually fell, bringing Epp's longtime career with the company to a close.

Epp saw it as a blessing in disguise.

> **"To be honest, when I received my layoff or my termination notice, it was a godsend."**
> Larry Epp

"To be honest, when I received my layoff or my termination notice, it was a godsend," said Epp, 46, who was let go in April 2006. "My manager was in tears as she told me and I was ready to do my (Lotto) 6/49 happy dance because I was given a second chance and it was exciting."

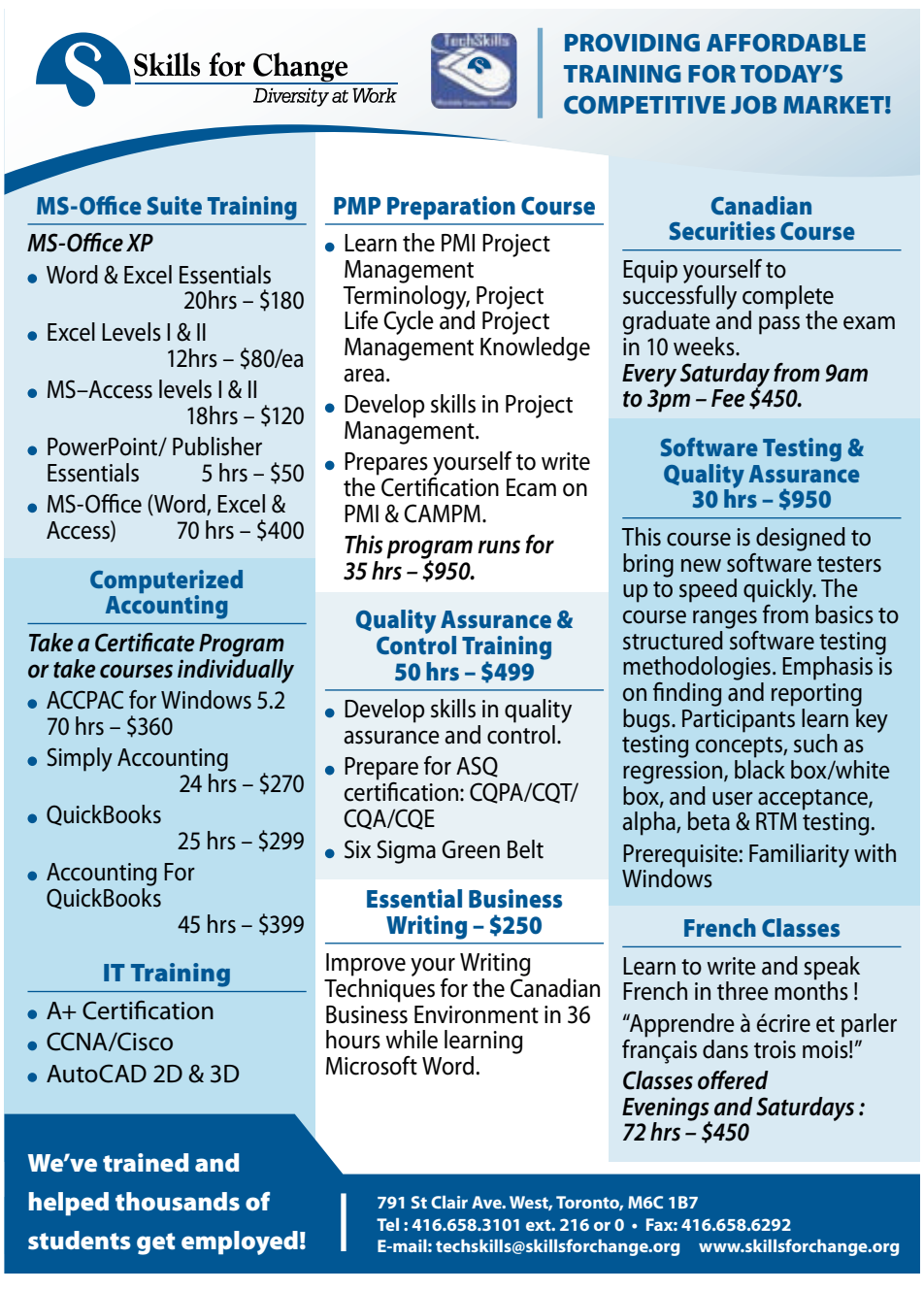
Part of that second chance came wrapped up in the form of a $5,000 educational allowance included in his severance package. Epp decided to take his longtime passion for gardening and put it into professional practice.

With unemployment levels expected to rise in the face of the economic downturn, workers who have lost their jobs might consider charting a course like the one Epp followed: Returning to school to bolster academic credentials or forge an entirely new career path.

Janet Hercz, director of strategic development and operations at Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, said the last time there were comparable economic circumstances in the early 1990s, overall enrolment was up more than 12 per cent over that period.

"I think that's consistent with what people have seen happen within the educational category when the economy is going through a difficult time is that people look at what skills they have, what skills they might need to update or what new skills they might need to acquire to make sure that they are employable through the period of time."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Cruise cup up for auction

Tom Cruise's coffee cup is up for auction. A Brazilian website is selling the container reportedly used by the actor while on holiday in Brazil. So far the empty cup has a sale price of $2,200 US. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Entertainment

Beach beauty

Israeli beauty Bar Refaeli — who is dating Leonardo DiCaprio — will appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated's 2009 swimsuit edition.

PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Necessities grabs most Genie noms

MOVIES The Necessities of Life (Ce qu'il faut pour vivre), a film that explores the relationship between an Inuit hunter and an orphaned boy who helps him cope outside his community, has grabbed the most Genie Award nominations.

Canadian actor Gordon Pinsent and Quebec entertainer Caroline Neron announced this year's nominees Tuesday, with The Necessities of Life up for eight, including best motion picture, best director and best screenplay.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Big screen romance

Movies great for date night

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

Valentine's**Day**

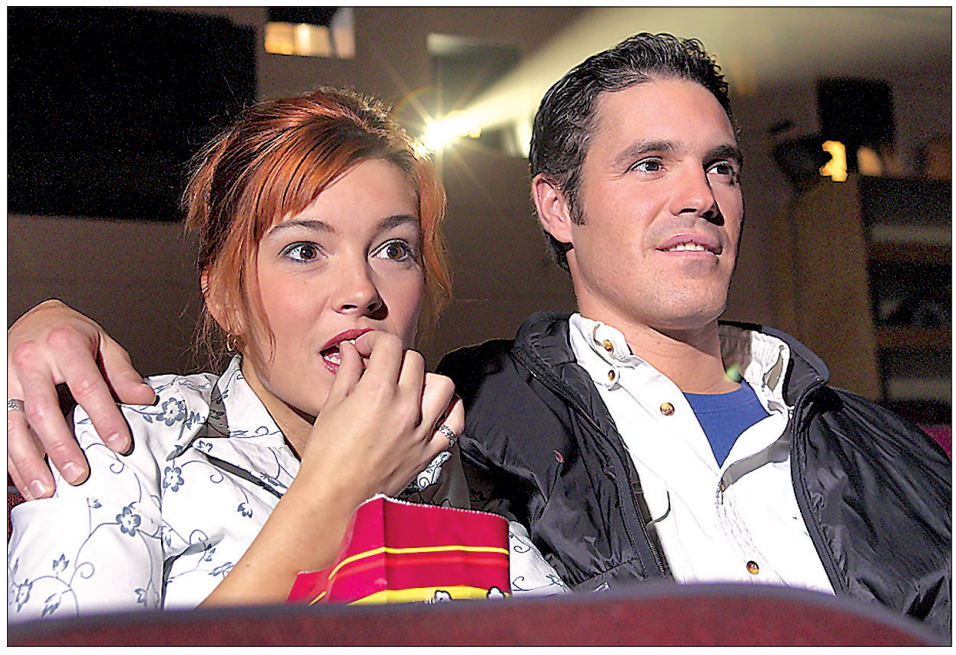
Ah, the movies. What better way to spend a frigid Friday night in February with your latest crush? Sitting in a dark theatre, close enough for your shoulders and elbows to touch, and maybe reaching for that hot, buttery popcorn or the Junior Mints at the same time.

Going to the movies has always been a good date-night option says Paul Dergarabedian, box office analyst for Hollywood.com.

"There's just something about dinner and a movie that really says romance," he said. "You can bond through the experience of enjoying a movie together and being able to talk about it after."

Movies are a great conversation builder and point of reference for people, he said. "So it instantly allows rapport to develop between you," he added.

But be careful, warns dating expert Kim Hughes, editor-in-chief for online dating site Lavalife, going to the movies is not always the best first date.



Movies are a great conversation builder, but not always the best choice for the first date.

Top romantic comedies

10. Bridget Jones's Diary
9. It Happened One Night
8. Groundhog Day
7. Some Like it Hot
6. Four Weddings and a Funeral
5. Pretty Woman
4. Moonstruck
3. Annie Hall
2. The Philadelphia Story
1. When Harry Met Sally

MOVIEFONE

"You don't really get a chance to get to know each other," she said. The dating guru says that going to a movie on the first date is also too much of a time commitment.

"As a general rule we say great first dates ... are about an hour," she said. "Because that way, if it's fantastic, you can make a second date and go to a movie or go out for dinner or commit more time.

"If it's not fantastic, then an hour is a manageable amount of time to lose."

And although a romantic comedy might seem like a perfect date-night movie pick, Hughes suggests steering clear of them at the beginning of a relationship.

"I think that there would be kind of a squirmy factor with that," she said.

For Valentine's Day weekend, Dergarabedian suggests a good date movie — as strange as it may sound — might be the new version of Friday the 13th.

Romantic comedies such as He's Just Not That Into You and Confessions of a Shopaholic are also in theatres in time for Valentine's Day, but Hughes suggests these might be better to go see with friends.

Or, at least until you've gotten past those initial awkward stages of the dating game.

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Phoenix trading in movies for hip-hop

Joaquin Phoenix is torn between two lovers in what he professes will be his last film.

As he talks passionately about his new pursuits, it seems he's not torn between artistic muses. Movies are out, and music is in, Phoenix insists.

After the dark romantic drama Two Lovers, which opens in some markets Friday, Phoenix said he is through with acting, and nothing is going to coax the two-time Academy Award nominee back to that first creative love.

"I'm not one of those people, like, when I break up with my girlfriend, I don't ever see her again. I see her as friends, but do I ever think about getting back together? No, when I do something, I do it. So I have no intention," Phoenix, 34, said in an interview.

GETTY IMAGES

When Phoenix announced last fall that music was his new direction, many fans assumed he caught the country bug from playing Johnny Cash in 2005's Walk the Line. Instead, he surprised people again by turning to hip-hop, a genre he says he's adored since his teens.

"I love the storytelling aspects of hip hop, but I love the wordplay, as well," Phoenix said. "I just think the rhyming is fantastic, and I love, like, the raw emotion of it."

The switch has puzzled fans and prompted speculation that it's a put-on, fuelled by a video that turned up on the Web last month showing Phoenix rapping in a Las Vegas nightclub. The poor-quality video, with virtually incomprehensible audio, was not the sort of thing to earn Phoenix many admirers.

"No matter how good it is, people are going to ... make fun of me. It's just impossible. It's just not going to happen, but I can't worry about that," Phoenix said. "What I was focusing on was the song and trying to make the show as good as possible."

Phoenix has built a home recording studio where he is laying down tracks for an album and while it is mostly a solo effort, Phoenix hopes to do at least one track with rapper Diddy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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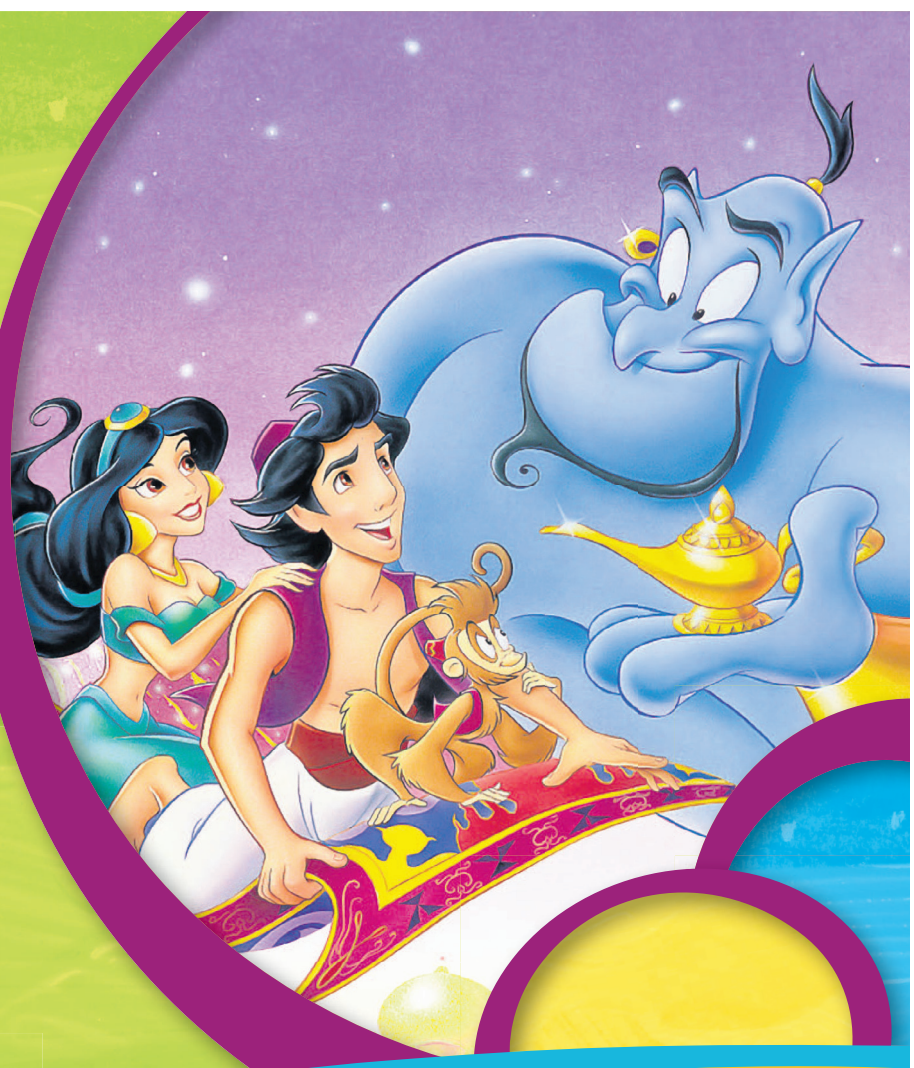

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Bringing home the fallen

Kevin Bacon's latest role focuses on an assignment that generally goes unnoticed — the task of a volunteer military escort.

GETTY IMAGES

Kevin Bacon stars as a military consultant in Taking Chance.

The 50-year-old actor was in town for the D.C. premiere of his new HBO film Taking Chance, at the Motion Picture Association of America. The film premieres Feb. 21 on HBO.

The film is based on the first-person account of Lt. Col. Michael Strobl, who escorted the remains of Lance Cpl. Chance Phelps to the Marine's hometown in Dubois, Wyo. Bacon stars as Strobl, who served as the military consultant for the film and co-wrote the screenplay.

Because of the true story behind the film, "it just feels like you're doing something that's just a little more important," Bacon said.

"When you're doing something like this which is about a real guy and a real man who was killed, and the war and the military, it just feels like it's got a little more weight," he said.

"When you're doing something like this which is about a real guy and a real man who was killed ... it just feels like it's got a little more weight"
Kevin Bacon

Phelps, 19, was killed while on a convoy in Iraq, two months after arriving there. After taking Phelps' remains to his hometown, Strobl wrote in his journal about the experience and the gratitude shown to him and Phelps' service by the people he encountered along the way.

Strobl, now a Pentagon defense analyst, said the military escort reflects the notion that service members are never alone.

"They weren't alone when they were fighting and they shouldn't be alone in their final trip home," Strobl said.

Bacon's role as Strobl follows his portrayal as another real-life Marine officer, Col. Jack Brennan in the 2008 Oscar-nominated film Frost/Nixon.

The Philadelphia native's 30-year career includes Footloose, A Few Good Men, and Mystic River. Bacon took some time out to tour Ford's Theatre; he is preparing to do a Showtime series about the family of Abraham Lincoln's assassin John Wilkes Booth. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Tatum action figure
Channing Tatum is one of five G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra stars to have a Hasbro action figure modeled in his likeness. **PEOPLE.COM**

The Game author offers dating advice

DOROTHY ROBINSON
Metro World News

INTERVIEW In 2005, author and self-described "average frustrated chump" Neil Strauss wrote an autobiographical account about becoming a master pick-up artist by using the tips from an underground group of men who considered themselves experts. That account, called The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists, was a huge bestseller. Here, the nerd-turned-stud gives his tips to make sure next year's Valentine's Day isn't a lonely one.

Q Is Valentine's Day a good day to pick up women?

A It's a perfect time. The sense of aloneness is heightened by the marketing blitz [laughs]. And if you do meet someone around this time, you can go on an "Un-Valentine's Day Date" — essentially, it's like a Valentine's Day date but not really since it seems like you're rebelling.

Valentine's Day

Q So what can shy guys do to help their chances of scoring a date for next year's Valentine's Day?

A A lot of people just say, "be confident," but you can't be confident on command. The more pressure you get, the more scared shy guys become. But Marilyn Manson once told me, "If you act like a rock star, people will believe you are a rock star." Act as if you're secure, as though you are worthy of other people's time.

Q What's your advice on sending flowers or candy to a crush for Valentine's Day?

A The rule about flowers and candy is this: You aren't allowed to give those to a girl until you're sure she's attracted to you. If she isn't, it's the creepiest thing in the world. But if she is, it's the most romantic thing in the world.

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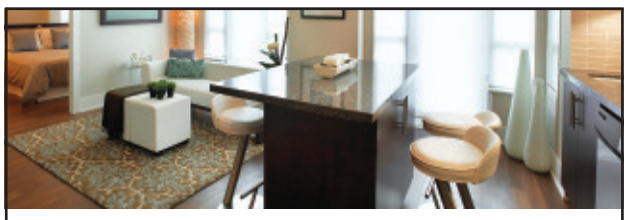

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Sexy serenade
John Mayer has prepared his own serenade to help his girlfriend Jennifer Aniston celebrate the big 4-0, a source tells People magazine. PEOPLE.COM

Designer says 'follow your heart'

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Vancouver designer Christie Clayton got the boot on last night's episode of Project Runway Canada for creating a dress even she admitted wasn't true to her design vision.

Clayton, 30, was emotional and upset during the judging panel of last night's episode as she conceded to the judges that her garment — a dress with a silky top half and high waist shorts in the bottom half — just wasn't her. "When you make something you don't believe in for people who are really important, it's really tough," Clayton told Metro.

Christie Clayton

"I really tried hard just to be myself on the show. I'm an edgy streetwear designer — usually I make really edgy clothes," she said.

She says being on the show taught her that sticking to your guns and doing what you believe in is most important.

"I learned to trust my own judgment. The big lesson was to always follow your heart and trust your own instinct," Clayton said.

Now that she's off the show, Clayton is happy to be back at her own clothing line, Carny Love (carnylove.com), getting her new spring and summer collection ready. She admits the level of experience and talent among the other designers was intimidating but that as stressful as being on the show was, it was worth it.

"I learned a lot about myself," Clayton said.

Tuesdays

- The second season of Project Runway Canada airs every Tuesday night on Global.

TO	Vu	SC	C		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 2/11/09	265	353	2	TVO	Expedition: Guyana (N)		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Little Dorrit (N)		The View From Here Director Alan Zweig.		
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Lie to Me "Pilot"		Life "Mirror Ball" (N)		(10:02) Life on Mars		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	The Week the Women Went		Being Erica (N)	(DVS)	CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		13: Fear Is Real (N)		Hates Chris	Friends	I Love Money		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	American Idol The top 36 semifinalists are revealed. (N)				CSI: NY (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		Party Monsters: Cabo		Kardashians: True Story		News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Destination Nor'Ouest 2		*Le Lion noir* (2007, Drame)			Nouv. mondes	Les Fabricants
	-	-	14	-	Raymond	Raymond	News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Only You* ★★ (1994, Romance-Comedy) Marisa Tomei.				To Serve and Protect		Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		Life "Mirror Ball" (N)		Law & Order (HDTV) (N)		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Lost "The Little Prince"		Lost (HDTV) (N)		(10:02) Life on Mars		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Lost "The Little Prince"		Lost (HDTV) (N)		(10:02) Law & Order		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two-Half Men	American Idol The top 36 semifinalists are revealed. (N)				Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	American Experience (N)		Looking for Lincoln Myths surrounding Abraham Lincoln.				Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two-Half Men	Family Guy	Privileged (HDTV)		90210 (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Friends	KTLA News	Two-Half Men	Two/Half Men	Privileged
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		La Corona		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	Kudlow Report		CNBC Reports (HDTV)		Westminster Dog Show		On the Money		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Combat	World Combat	The Ultimate Fighter		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Hockey Ottawa Senators at Buffalo Sabres. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
	411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	417	406	81	SC	Speed Performance Awards		Speed Report Special Edition		NASCAR 2009: Beginnings		NASCAR Racing: Sprint Cup		NASCAR Race
family	551	542	25	YTV	Prank Patrol	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	Father of Pride	Moral Orel
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	The Suite Life
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Grocery	Grocery	How Clean	Too Posh	Maxed Out	Maxed Out	Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	America's Best Dance Crew		Brooke Knows	Brooke Knows	Degrassi: TNG	Degrassi: TNG	Video on Trial	Video on Trial	PunchMuch
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Exterminators	Exterminators
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Linea di Confine (Italian).				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	MusicProfile	Where You At	Revival	Fabulous Life Of...		All-Time Top 10		Revival
	575	583	38	CMT	CMT's Greatest		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Chords
	616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		About a Girl	About a Girl	The Guard (HDTV)		Big Love "Dating Game"		House
	620	523	40	BVO	The Achievers	Landscape	Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	Wingfield	Death at-Opera	Broadway	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Chop Shop (N)	Mr. Friday	Real Housewives of OC		Kimora: Fab	Kardashians	ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Yankee White"		Cities of the Underworld		Museum Mysteries-World		NCIS "Yankee White"		Lost Inventions
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (DVS)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Jon Dore Show	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	Property Shop	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Hid Potential	Really Big Flip	Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*A Simple Plan* ★★ (1998, Suspense) Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*Menace II Society* ★★★ (1993, Drama) Tyrin Turner.				*Soul Plane* ★★ (2004, Comedy)		
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Lost		Star Trek: Voyager		Rabbit Fall	Rabbit Fall	Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	The Real World		The Real World (N)		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Reality	Ad Persuasion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef		Restaurant
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	SOUL (Series Premiere) (N)		Tuscany		Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	Blush: Make-Up Artist		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	The Wonder	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
	115	711	101	TVA	Poule-oeufs or	Star Académie:	Destinées "Jeu de rôle" (SC)		Dommages et intérêts (HDTV)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Denis Lévesque	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Medium		Medium		Mediums	Psychic Det.	Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	*White Tuft*	*Past Lies* (2008, Suspense) Nicole Eggert.			*1408* ★★★ (2007, Horror) John Cusack.				*Anamorph*
	305	612	306	PIX	*The Net*	*A Lapse of Memory* (1992, Drama)			*Jason X* ★ (2002, Horror) Lexa Doig.			(10:45) *Kids* (1995)	

critics' corner

Lost
We need Dramamine just to keep us from passing out with all these twists. Locke (Terry O'Quinn) takes on the burden of trying to stop the island's increasingly violent shifts through time. Meanwhile, Ben (Michael Emerson) hits a roadblock in his attempt to reunite the Oceanic 6 and bring them back to the island in "This Place Is Death." Naveen Andrews, Matthew Fox, Jorge Garcia and Evangeline Lilly also star. 9 PM on ABC ACH-B

1408
John Cusack probably is the only actor who could make a cheesy horror film really good. He stars as Mike, who, like Houdini, tries to prove supernatural things false. One of his trips takes him to a reportedly haunted hotel room where — lo and behold — he realizes it really is haunted. Paul Birchard and Margot Leicester also star in this 2007 thriller. 9 PM on M1

In brief

LAWSUIT The Village People's first cop wants a revamped version of the group to stop using his likeness and voice. The lawsuit filed by Victor Willis claims companies continue to use his voice and picture to promote the new Village People.

DEATH Phil Carey, best known for his role as business tycoon Asa Buchanan in the ABC soap opera One Life to Live, has died. He was 83.

SETTLEMENT Former Sopranos actor Vincent Pastore and his ex-fiancee have settled their lawsuit. Terms weren't immediately disclosed. Lisa Regina's $5.5-million civil lawsuit alleged that Pastore hit her during an April 2005 dispute.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
Metro World News fashion correspondent

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

Birkhead still struggles with Anna Nicole's death
Larry Birkhead says he still struggles with the death of Anna Nicole Smith, which happened two years ago Sunday. "It's hard to believe that Anna is gone," Birkhead — who fathered two-year-old Dannielynn with the actress — tells Usmagazine.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Rihanna delays her concert in Malaysia

CAREER Usmagazine.com is reporting that Rihanna has postponed a concert in Malaysia this week, an organizer confirmed Tuesday to the website.

Rihanna's Los Angeles-based reps informed Malaysia's Pineapple Concerts that a show slated for Friday would have to be rescheduled to an unspecified date "in light of recent events involving Rihanna," Pineapple Concerts said in a statement to the Associated Press.

Indonesia and Malaysia were the latest stops on the singer's Good Girl Gone Bad tour. The singer intends to travel back to her native Barbados to be with family, usmagazine.com reports.

The website adds that she is also providing "ongoing" cooperation with police during their battery investigation against Brown, a police source tells the Los Angeles Times. Unnamed sources told the Times that Rihanna (real name: Robyn Fenty) told police that Brown had hurt her the night before the Grammys.

Meanwhile, Brown who will be arraigned March 5, boarded a private plane leaving L.A. on Monday, Us magazine reports. The website also says Brown has pulled out of an appearance at the NBA All-Stars, a league spokesperson confirmed.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Jolie frets over earrings

PEOPLE Angelina Jolie lost a pair of multi-million dollar diamond earrings, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Changeling star left the Asprey jewellery she wore to the BAFTA Awards on Sunday in her suite at London's Dorchester Hotel when she left to return to the U.S.

The 33-year-old actress realized she had forgotten the earrings as she was preparing to board her flight and called hotel staff, begging them to search her suite.

A source said: "Staff got a frantic call from Angelina at the airport, urging them to take her room apart. Happily, the diamonds were found after a 90-minute search and promptly sent back to Los Angeles."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hudson and Owen reunite

RELATIONSHIP Hollywood's on-again, off-again couple — Kate Hudson and Owen Wilson — are on yet again, people.com is reporting.

"They're back together," a source tells People magazine of the pair, who spent all of Sunday together at Wilson's Malibu home. Also there: Hudson's 5-year-old son Ryder.

Hudson, 29, and Wilson, 40, most recently reunited in Feb. 2008, when they appeared cozy at last year's Academy Awards.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Miley apologizes again for photo

APOLOGY Miley Cyrus has made a second apology over her racially offensive photograph, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Hannah Montana star — who last week spoke out about the picture of her slanting her eyes, but was later blasted for being disingenuous — has issued a more serious and heartfelt apology.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Spears to pay Fed $5,000 to see sons

PEOPLE Britney Spears will pay Kevin Federline $5,000 U.S. a week so she can see her sons while on tour, femalefirst.co.uk reports. It has been reported a deal has been signed by the Womanizer singer and her ex-husband, to ensure Spears has access to their two children while she is on the road.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Bullock doesn't rule out children

FAMILY More than three years into her marriage to Jesse James, Sandra Bullock says she enjoys being a stepmother — though she hasn't ruled out having her own children as well, people.com reports.

"I have family in spades," Bullock, 44, tells InStyle magazine for its March issue. The actress' husband has three children — son Jesse Jr., 11, and daughters Chandler, 14, and Sunny, 5 — from two previous marriages.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Duff defends remarks

CAREER Hilary Duff says she doesn't regret dissing Faye Dunaway, usmagazine.com reports.

After Dunaway, 68, criticized Duff's acting skills when she learned the singer, 21, was assuming her role in an upcoming remake of 1967's Bonnie and Clyde, Duff sniped, "None of my fans even knew who she is."

On Tuesday's Bonnie Hunt Show, Duff defends her remarks.

"She started acting way later than I did so I think I have time to grow and grow with each project," she says. "I am learning and work hard at my craft."

While Duff admits her remark was mean, she says, "It's not OK for people to take stabs at you and to say mean things for no reason."

Hunt tried to comfort Duff on the episode of her talk show, saying: "I think even Faye went through a time, if you look historically, where some people might have said that about her," Hunt tells the singer.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

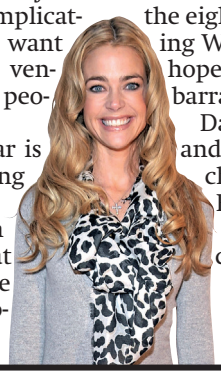
Richards' Dancing fears

CAREER Denise Richards called her last foray into reality TV It's Complicated, and she may want to call her next venture It's Scary, people.com reports.

"My biggest fear is just forgetting everything right before going on live, that's what I'm scared of," the actress tells People magazine about her new role as contestant on the eighth season of Dancing With the Stars. "All I hope is that I don't embarrass my girls."

Daughters Sam, 4, and Lola, 3, will be cheering on Richards, 37, throughout the competition.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Kanye parties with three women

PEOPLE Kanye West sneaked out of a Los Angeles nightclub with three women, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The rapper, who has been single since splitting from fiancée Alexis Phifer last year, was surrounded by stunning females at the launch of Belvedere IX Vodka at Los Angeles' MyHouse last week.

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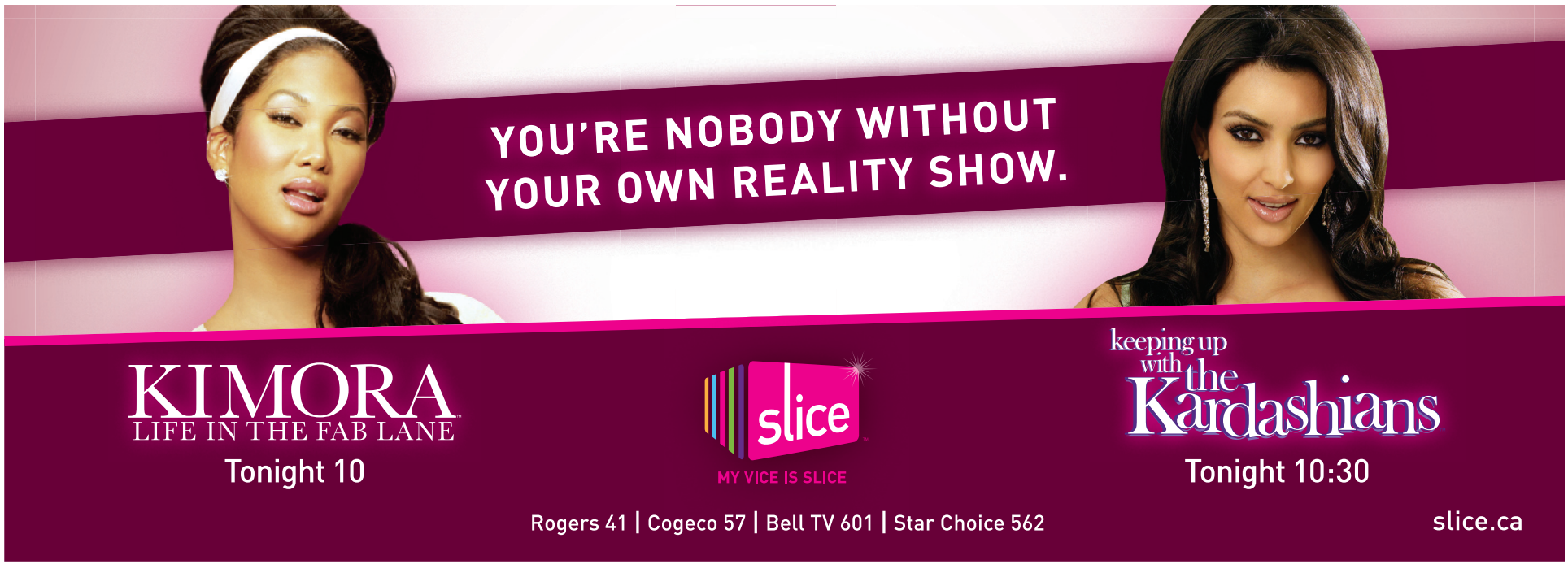

The Weather Network
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Today: Rain 90% 7° / -1°
Thursday: Rain and snow 80% 4° / -9°
Friday: Variable -2° / -11°

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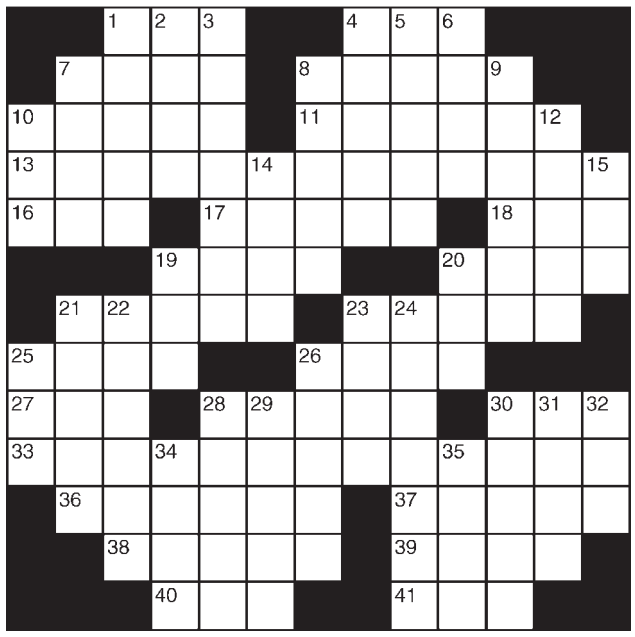

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	9	2					3	
8					1		4	
7			6		9	8		
	5			4		7		9
6		9		1			2	
		3	2		5			1
	8		3					5
	2					6	7	

Crossword across

1 Vacationing
4 Bribe
7 Duel tool
8 Stimulant
10 Gave it a whack
11 Light brown fur
13 Department store employee
16 "A Chorus Line" song
17 Circular
18 Anger
19 Exceptional
20 Oklahoma city
21 Invigorating
23 Spree
25 Appear
26 Colour quality
27 Branch
28 Streetcars' kin
30 High-arc shot
33 Storm-predicting agency
36 In layers
37 Shabby
38 Indigent
39 Hollywood clashers
40 Susan of "L.A. Law"
41 Lair

Crossword down

1 Put one's two cents in
2 Nourish
3 Men's hats
4 Reject with disdain
5 Made up one's mind
6 Pron. type
7 "— go bragh!"
8 Excessive
9 On the way up
10 Even number
12 Eagle's home
14 Drudgery
15 Roulette bet
19 Edge
20 Compass dir.
21 Jaunty chapeau
22 Go nowhere
23 Zero-star movie
24 Protected, in a way
25 Witnessed
26 Late
28 "... — Men in a Tub"
29 High-pitched
30 Spill the beans
31 Dinner for Dobbin
32 Purchase
34 Prepared to drive (with "up")
35 Anger

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

M	E	S	S		F	O	B		W	A	N	D		
A	X	L	E		A	P	R		A	L	E	E		
U	P	O	N		T	E	A	R	D	O	W	N		
L	O	W	D	O	W	N		I	D	E	S	T		
			E	R	A		F	O	E					
S	T	A	R	R		P	U	T	D	O	W	N		
O	O	P			O	A	R			L	E	O		
L	E	T	D	O	W	N		R	I	D	E	R		
			A	W	L		B	U	N					
S	H	I	R	E		S	U	N	D	O	W	N		
L	O	C	K	D	O	W	N		E	R	I	E		
O	B	O	E		V	I	N		E	E	L	S		
B	O	N	N		A	M	Y		D	O	L	T		

2	3	6	7	8	5	4	9	1
9	8	5	4	1	2	3	6	7
1	7	4	9	6	3	5	2	8
6	4	2	8	3	7	9	1	5
8	1	9	5	2	6	7	4	3
3	5	7	1	9	4	2	8	6
4	6	8	3	5	9	1	7	2
7	2	3	6	4	1	8	5	9
5	9	1	2	7	8	6	3	4

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SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Butternut Squash Gratin

INGREDIENTS:
1 butternut squash, about 2 lbs (1 kg), halved crosswise, then lengthwise, seeded and peeled
1 medium red onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups (375 ml) frozen corn kernels, thawed
2 1/4 tsp (11 ml) extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup (75 ml) grated Parmesan cheese

METHOD:
1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Quarter butternut squash pieces lengthwise and then cut crosswise into 1/2-in. (1-cm) thick chunks. Combine squash, onion, corn and oil in large bowl, tossing to coat.
2. Arrange vegetables in a 13 x 9-in. (30 x 20-cm) baking dish. Bake until butternut squash is tender, 40 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking time.
3. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over vegetables and bake until melted and golden, 5 minutes.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
All is well, whether you know it or not. Don't argue with anyone who is on an emotional rollercoaster. Contact an estranged friend to apologize.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You'll sigh with relief when you find you don't need to know everything. Be patient with an inconsistent visitor. A hacker causes a serious problem.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Ask if you want to know the true purpose of a visit. Increase your happiness without spending money. You're unscathed by a stressful situation.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Vulgar language upsets you. Your hunger for an adventure will soon be satisfied. A no-nonsense person will be unsentimental about the past.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Shabby treatment causes you to lose interest. The least said about a clash, the better. Outrageous news will come through outside sources.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Be careful about what you say. Commitment demands will be offensive. A confession is funny when temptation can't be avoided.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A spoiled brat makes you groan. Keep quiet about a secret deal. A casual observer will have much to say about solutions to problems.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Your anxiety about the future must be dispelled. Broken promises lead to an important insight. An important man needs your help.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
An injustice won't please you and you'll say so. Sharing your sadness will soothe you. Someone makes sense when he kicks up a fuss.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A man leaves sooner than he planned. Use your good judgment about choices. An insincere woman grates on your nerves.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A slothful man tames a frightened friend. Surprising news will come from a sinister person. A guilty woman admits to witnessing an incident.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A service person clears up some confusion. A self-disciplined guy benefits from your friendship. Your worries will bloom if you overreact.

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